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ABSTRACT

This document is comprised of four issues of a quarterly publication presenting information related to the Reggio Emilia approach to preschool education. Regularly appearing features of the publication include editorials, a calendar of conferences and workshops of related interest, a list of Reggio networks in the United States and Canada, and a partial listing of text, web site, and audiovisual Reggio resources. The spring 1999 issue contains articles on the image of the child and the child's environment as a fundamental principle in infant-toddler centers, and on the rewards of project work with infants and toddlers. The summer/fall 1999 issue includes articles on the daily life of children in Reggio Emilia programs, building environments to support children's potential, building collegiality among educators, recasting Reggio Emilia to inform teaching in the U.S., and weaving the Reggio Emilia approach into U.S. schools. The winter/spring 2000 issue contains articles on the nature of professional development in the Reggio Emilia infant-toddler centers and preschools, the development of a pedagogy of collaborative inquiry, and the creation of learning communities to support teacher education. The summer 2000 issue continues the article from the preceding issue on the nature of professional development in the Reggio Emilia infant-toddler centers and preschools, and includes an article on the potential of collaborative inquiry. (KB)

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The Merrill-Palmer Institute
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The Image of the Child and of the Child's Environment as a Fundamental Principle in the Infant-Toddler Centers of Reggio Emilia

by Carina Rinaldi

Carina Rinaldi is the director of the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools and pedagogical consultant for Reggio Children in Reggio Emilia, Italy. This is an excerpt from one of her presentations during a conference titled "The Experience of Infant-Toddler Centers in Italy: Reggio Emilia and Pisa" at Lesley College, Cambridge, Mass. in April 1998.

The implementation of policies and practice in early childhood education is inexorably linked to the pedagogical question of what the society hopes for children and what the society expects from children. This is an issue that must be raised by every generation and now is the time for our generation to address this question. The solution that we adopt and the schools that we organize directly reflect our concept of the potential and rights of the children, as well as the role and tradition that our society creates for children. It is my hope to renew pedagogical practice and legitimate the early childhood institution. The school for young children is extremely important to our understanding of certain factors including: what kind of future we will build for the children and with the children; and, what role we will give to early childhood institutions. Are they services for families, spaces for socialization or places of education? What are the early childhood institutions that we are building?

*The school is a place
for the culture,
not only in which to
transmit the culture
but in which
to create the culture
of the children,
the culture of childhood
and the culture of the
infant-toddler center.
—Carina Rinaldi*

There are many basic questions that force us to reflect on the fundamental idea upon which our society is based. Questions such as: Who is the child? What is childhood? Does childhood simply exist or is it created by us? Each society creates its image of childhood and of its child.

How does a child learn? What is the meaning of to educate? What is the relationship between infant centers, school, family and society? Are infant-toddler centers and schools, in general, a preparation for life or are they part of life? These questions have accompanied our experience since the beginning.

We want to share with you a few of our questions... questions that can describe the pedagogical, political, social and cultural identity of our

early childhood services for children from zero to six years. In Reggio, we are convinced that these early childhood services are also places of education. It is not impossible to combine social services and education. I am referring to a kind of education which focuses

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The drawings in this issue were created by the two- and three-year-old children at the Peter Pan Infant-Toddler Center in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, comments drawn from the voices of Reggio Children, the voices represented are those of the individual contributors representing their own interpretations of the Reggio approach to this issue in time. We seek a diversity of opinions and do not attempt to present the consensus to the issue of Reggio.

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a child who is full
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a child who is fully able
to create maps for
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cognitive and
symbolic orientation.
Because of all this,
a young child reacts
with a competent system of
abilities, learning strategies
and ways of organizing
relationships.*

- Carlina Rinaldi

• • •



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on the child in relationship with the family, the teacher, the other children and the broader cultural context, the society. These services are not counter to the family or substitutes for the families, but services that are integrated with the family. They are places of dialogue, places of relations, places of participation, places of education in a process that involves children, teachers and families.

In order to better understand the reasons for our beliefs, we need to discuss some of the fundamental strategies that support our experience. The title of my communication is "The Image of the Child." Each of us has his own image of the child, the expectation that you have when you look at the child. The definition of identity plays a determining role in our definition of the image of the child which was developed by the pedagogy that inspires the infant-toddler center and preschool in Reggio Emilia. The image that you have in your life, as a citizen, in the life of your family, inspires your expectation when you look at the child and you create the school for them. This is also true for the society. Childhood is created by each society. Each society can create its own image of the child. The image is a cultural convention and there are many possible images, some of which focus on what the child is or has but others, unfortunately, focus on what the child is not or does not have, what he's not able to do. Some images focus more on his or her needs rather than his or her power and capacity, what the child cannot be or do rather than what the child can be or do. Until a child is 10 months or 12 months old, he or she cannot speak and some say he or she cannot communicate with us. Why is this? Again, the image is a cultural convention, a cultural interpretation and, therefore, a political and social issue which enables us to recognize or not to recognize certain qualities and potential of children. As a result, we have expectations or not and construct a context that values the qualities and potential that we give to the children. Your image of the child is a social and cultural image that determines if you recognize his or her life in the quality of the social services and school that you create. The image of the child is, therefore, a determining factor in the definition of the social and ethical identity of the subject. It is the determining factor in the definition of his or her rights and the determining factor in the definition of the educational context as a right for children and their families.

One of the fundamental points of the Reggio philosophy is an image of the child who experiences the world, who feels a part of the world right from birth ... a child who is full of curiosities, full of desire to live ... a child who is full of desire and ability to communicate from the start of his or her life ... a child who is fully able to create maps for his personal, social, cognitive, affective and symbolic orientation. Because of all this, a young child reacts with a competent system of abilities, learning strategies and ways of organizing relationships. In synthesis, our image is of a child who is competent, active, critical and, therefore, a child who may be seen as a challenge and, sometimes, as troublesome. In some ways, this child is not easy. This child is a person,

a subject of life. This child produces change in the system in which he or she is involved, both in the family system and in the social system. Think of how much could change in this society, when a child emerges as a subject of life, a social subject, a citizen ... emerging on the social, political and cultural scene as a subject of life and not only of need. To us, the child is a producer of culture, values and rights, competent in learning and competent in communicating with all of the hundred languages.

We are talking about the child, the child that you meet every day in Reggio Emilia, at home, everywhere in the world. Our children need to be this way: they are this way, they are searching for a bond. Their looks show their intention of communicating, their curiosity, their desire. We talk about the child as a researcher, trying to understand the meaning of life, trying to answer these fundamental questions: What is life and why are we here? If we are able to listen better and observe more closely, we will see that the children speak to us, even when they don't speak.

In Reggio, we have tried to develop this theory about the image of the child and, to develop an experience that could be employed to bring us to the level of this new child in front of us. Children learn through the relationship with the cultural and school context. We have to try to organize a school, an infant-toddler center for this child. We have to try to organize a cultural and school context that might become an ideal place for developing and valuing children's learning and experiences. In summary, we believe that motivation and competence in learning can be developed or muted depending on the awareness and the openness of the place where the children live. A lot depends on the society, the school, the culture. When we consider the question of whether the human being is a product of nature or a product of culture, of genetics or of the environment, the question of nature vs. nurture, we find that what is important to understand is the interconnection and infinite ways in which nature and nurture interact, and where there are parallel situations for this incredible dance of life that is the child and the life of the child. A strong image of the child is also a strong image of the teacher and a strong image of the school. It is up to all of us to understand the real subject that we are discussing when we talk about the image of the child. Therefore, it becomes particularly important to construct a school environment, an infant-toddler center and preschool, that can offer the children a sense of security that comes from feeling accepted and welcome; a space that welcomes the child, welcomes the family, welcomes the teacher, welcomes everyone because the school is not a place that substitutes for the family but a place for a new way to educate the children and to educate ourselves, a new place for our culture. When you talk about education, you talk about culture and values of the culture. The school environment must be a space that welcomes the individual and the group, the action and the reflection. A school, an infant-toddler center, is first of all a relational system where the children and the adults are not only formally initiated to an organization, a form of our culture, but also have the possibility to create culture. The creative

act is much more possible when educational creativity involves not only the children, not only the teachers, but also the parents and the entire society around the children.

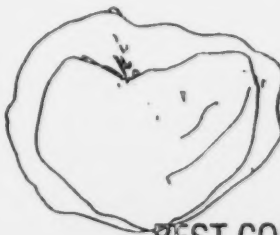
For us, the three subjects of education are the children, the teachers and the families. These three subjects are all in relationship with each other and are an interconnected system. This means that everything that happens to me affects you. You cannot have a school in which the child doesn't feel right, in which the teacher doesn't feel right, in which the family doesn't feel right. It is essential to create a school and infant-toddler center in which all the subjects feel welcomed, a place of relationships. Education is something that you try to create everyday. When you organize an infant-toddler center, a space for children, with this image of the child and you believe that the child is struggling with relationships with the other children and with the other subjects, teachers and parents, you have to organize space and time that can welcome not only the children, but also the teachers and the families. When you talk about *progettazione* or organization, or when you try to plan things for this space, you are not thinking only about the children, but also about the teachers and the families. That means to try to provide opportunities for learning and constructing knowledge for children, teachers and families.

I would like to share with you the complexities of this system. It is important to understand that what defines your point of view is the spaces that you create for persons, individuals, subjects... a system that is strongly connected with the family and the cultural background. You have the subjects, the family and the infant, and you have to begin with them. You believe in a powerful child and a powerful teacher. You have to sustain the teacher to become a teacher that this child needs. You have to respect the rights of the child. The school, the infant-toddler center is a system of relationships. It is for the children, but you cannot lose the family and the society, the place where this child lives. The child is a social subject. The school is a place for the culture, not only in which to translate the culture but in which to create the culture of the children, the culture of childhood and the culture of the infant-toddler center.

We have tried to interpret this message in the infant-toddler centers and preschools in Reggio. This right can be our way of negotiating what we discover, our process, our pleasure. When you look at your child, your family and your society while creating this environment, it becomes much more than a space. It is a part of life which cannot be copied, only created. Our interpretation of the environment is not a model. It's our way. You will want to find your own way. The child is the center of this system of many relationships which the young child immediately begins to have in time and space. The child is the protagonist, trying to discover and understand connection, relationships and responses, working out his or her hypotheses

and involving the other children in his or her investigations. Given the theory of the child, you can understand why the space cannot be too static and why we design the space as warm, welcoming, stimulating and safe. The space encourages investigation. It is able to renew itself, to recognize the needs and the requests but also the life of the children and the adults who live in that image. Therefore, the space has the possibility to transform itself. The space has to communicate. It can speak many different languages. The space is a powerful and fundamental language. It can welcome and exalt differences. In this way, the space can make some sort of relationship between us and others. That means that when we organize the space, we are also thinking about a way of living, the quantity and quality of relationships and possibilities. In that space, we try to organize and to guarantee encounters with the others and with ourselves. We try to promote relationships and collaboration in the group, but also highlight individual identities and personal space. We try to stimulate investigation and exchange, cooperation and conflict.

For us in Reggio, the infant-toddler centers are places of life for children, teachers and families... places to not only transmit culture and support the family, but to create new culture, the culture of childhood, the culture of the child... places in which you can offer to your society a new image of the child, a new image of childhood, a new image of the teacher, a new image of the families. All over the western world, the family seems to feel alone from the moment of the birth of the child. The infant-toddler center is a place which supports the family and the citizens of a new century, of a new future. Our generation can help determine the future for our children. That is the reason why we not only have to work together in order to understand what to do for the children, we have to ask them to become good parents, good teachers and form a good society. ■



Courtesy of Arcobaleno Infant-Toddler Center and Lella Gaudini

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Perspectives from the editorial board

by Carolyn Edwards

Carolyn Edwards is professor of Psychology and Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and one of the editors of *The Hundred Languages of Children* and *The Hundred Languages of Children Advanced Reflections*. Carolyn has studied and written about Italian early childhood education for more than 15 years.

For the past three decades, certain Italian regions and localities have been part of a widespread and important European movement to create and sustain high-quality systems of care and education to serve very young children and their families. The goal of this movement has been to find ways to provide publicly-supported programs that simultaneously meet many needs—needs that are not thought of as fixed and defined but instead are continually undergoing change as society and parenting themselves change and evolve. The movement has held to a multi-faceted view of infant-toddler programs as early childhood institutions. Therefore, it has refused tendencies to divide its vision into separate parts: infant-toddler care, early education, family support, early intervention and special education. Instead, it has always maintained the essential unity of these interrelated missions. Thus, in Reggio Emilia and other European localities with

exemplary programs for children under three years, infant-toddler services recognize not only parents' rights for dependable and affordable care during the working day but also children's rights for particular services to meet their unique development (including rights arising from cultural, linguistic, medical or educational differences). As well, the services are intended to serve parents' and children's desires for socialization into networks of friendship and knowledge of the wider community and citizens' yearning for common experiences that advance the general level of public knowledge and take advantage of the great potential of children. Rather than dividing the generations, the services even serve grandparents' and older persons' needs to be connected and contribute to the lives of the next generation.

Reggio Emilia has been a leader in this movement for excellent public programs for children under three and educators from Reggio Emilia have participated in debates and discussions with other cities and countries about what should be the services for infants and toddlers and their families. In my view, the questions debated include: What constitutes a democratic and participatory system? What kinds and combinations of services and programs can best serve different children and families? What does it mean to create organizations and ways of working that are responsive to the particular character of each city? How can a locality build a system that preserves the best of its history, traditions and shared values? Through continual dialogue, negotiation and experimentation, the leaders of Reggio Emilia have shared ideas with other educators in other parts of Italy and around the world, and they have built upon their experiences, reading and questioning in a spiraling process of gradual and reflection-based evolution.

Here in the United States, the time is right to take a serious interest in the infant-toddler programs of Reggio Emilia. One reason is the new evidence of the importance of appropriate stimulation, secure relationships and quality experiences for young children's healthy development, including brain development. A second reason is the increasing need and choice on the part of families to opt for group care of young infants, in spite of the fact that most available care is

not of high quality, and much of it is not even of adequate quality. A third reason is the recent expansion of the federal role in infant-toddler programs through welfare reform and subsidized child care as well as through expansion of Early Head Start Programs for infants from birth to three years of age. The expansion of Early Head Start has created a close alliance between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in formulating a family-centered approach that will not separate the child from his or her family, culture and community and, possibly, alarm the public about a "big brother" style of impersonal, bureaucratic child care.

Recent episodes of teenage violence in U.S. suburban middle-class schools have raised a general level of alarm in this country about the insidiously damaging influences to which we may be continually subjecting our children and youth, not necessarily only the poor and the newly-arrived. Today, we know more than ever about the destructive legacies of childhood trauma, neglect, abuse and inadequate stimulation, and also the positive importance of secure relationships and quality learning environments. We can make an even more forceful case for investing in childhood, and in prevention and intervention through family-focused programs that strengthen and support communities. Programs focused on at-risk children, for example, save countable dollars in the long run because they create a positive dynamic, strengthening children's later attitudes toward work and parenting, as well as their role in their extended families and neighborhoods.

Close, loving relationships at home and in other places where children spend their day are essential for healthy physical, cognitive and emotional development. From the child's point of view, close relationships are the where, how and why of development, that is, the context, the medium and the motivation for development. Indeed, psychological researchers in the last 10 years have formulated a "relationships-centered model" of educational and therapeutic caregiving that bears a close similarity to the philosophy of "education as relationships."

that underlies the Reggio Emilia approach. Indeed, we now have a solid body of theory and research findings that points to the central and necessary role of close relationships in facilitating children's growth and learning, including brain development. Language, symbolic thinking, social competence, emotion regulation and morality are defined and expanded in the context of close relationships, that is to say, through companionship with parents, siblings, grandparents and other close relatives as well as teachers and caregivers who support the family's role.

Early care and nurturing have a decisive and long-lasting impact on how people develop, their ability to learn and their capacity to regulate their emotions. The explicit recognition of close, loving relationships and quality learning environments as essential to healthy development has influenced practice in a variety of applied settings. In the United States, the pioneering work took place over the last decade in mental health clinics and early intervention programs serving "at risk" children, but lately, relationship concepts such as "continuity of care" and "partnership with parents" (central to the Reggio Emilia approach) have spread to more preventive settings, such as Head Start and Early Head Start (Lally, 1998). Many studies demonstrate that learning and social development suffer when early childhood programs experience very high teacher turnover. Similarly, close friendships between

not of high quality, and much of it is not even of adequate quality. A third reason is the recent expansion of the federal role in infant-toddler programs through welfare reform and subsidized child care as well as through expansion of Early Head Start Programs for infants from birth to three years of age. The expansion of Early Head Start has created a close alliance between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in formulating a family-centered approach that will not separate the child from his or her family, culture and community and, possibly, alarm the public about a "big brother" style of impersonal, bureaucratic child care.

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Carolyn Edwards

toddlers and preschool peers take time to develop out provide measurable reassurance and support through times of stress and transition. Today, excellent infant-toddler care and education in the United States is defined through terms such as developmentally-appropriate, family-focused, community-centered, inclusionary and culturally-sensitive. All of these terms point to different aspects of the holistic and systematic view that also underlie thinking in Italy.

Yet, in spite of all this consensus about what young children and their families need and deserve, there continues to be a crisis today in the quality of early childhood services, especially for low-income families and the youngest children. Head Start serves only two out of five children who are eligible to participate and Early Head Start programs are just coming on-line in most communities. Infants and young children who receive the poorest and most unstable child care are often those whose parents are living the most stressful lives with the most discontinuity. The Quality 2000 study found that between 1988 and 1994, children in three multi-site observational settings were not well-served (Shore, 1997). The situation was worse for the youngest children: among children under age three, 35 to 40 percent attended programs judged by experts to be detrimental to their health, safety and development.

If we, in the United States, want to realize the promise and potential of good services . . . namely, gains in impulse control and cognitive development, reduced rates of criminal activity, reduced school failure and teen pregnancy, increased adult economic self-sufficiency . . . we must advocate for higher quality, availability and accessibility of programs supporting our youngest children and their families. Successful programs can be found in many places in the United States, but for a beautiful illustration of a whole system of public centers serving children under three years, with inviting and wonderful environments, inclusionary spirit of belonging, strong organization, reciprocal relationships with families and community, and joyful learning experiences day to day, we can learn much from dialogue with the educators of Reggio Emilia. ■

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Reaping the Rewards of Project Work with Infants and Toddlers

by Michele Sanderson

Michele is a teacher at A. Sophie Rogers Laboratory School for Child and Family Studies, Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Michele attended Reggio Children's Summer Institute in Columbus in July 1997.

The Project

The staff in the infant-toddler room at the A. Sophie Rogers Laboratory School felt that we had a clear image of the child as suggested by the educators of Reggio Emilia. Our team of two full-time teachers and two part-time graduate students saw our mixed-age group of babies and toddlers as capable and full of potential. However, we were soon to rethink our image of this community of children, comprised of two infants under twelve months, three young toddlers twelve to eighteen months old and five older toddlers aged two to three years. We began to appreciate the depth of their capabilities when we became involved in a construction project, a six-month journey into the world of "back-ohs, bull-ds and beep-beeps" [backhoes, bulldozers and trucks.] The benefits that grew out of this project work far exceeded our expectations. For us, it was a journey of discovery into the energy, strength and capabilities of our youngest researchers.

Since the university needed to make some structural improvements, a decision was made to tear down our old playground and relocate it to another area behind our building. This was a significant event which served as a catalyst for the interest in construction that was soon to envelope our class. One of our toddlers, a boy of 2.7 years, visited the playground construction site daily with his father as a way to transition into our classroom. As he brought his interest into the room in the form of dramatic play, he captured the attention of another toddler who was about the same age. Their budding friendship, grounded in their shared interest in construction, started to give shape and significance to the type of play that was occurring in our room. To support this interest, we began to take the children on walks to various construction sites on campus.

As a staff, we began to focus our curriculum planning on the idea of construction. We reflected on all of the areas that we thought the children might be interested in: the equipment, the workers, the debris being unearthed and the construction site itself. We added a fifth area, ways to incorporate literacy, reflecting our program's strong interest in emergent literacy with infants and toddlers. We were seeking to provide a print-rich environment that would support the children's growing knowledge of construction, allowing them to make connections between words and pictures, stories and experiences, as well as continuing their opportunities for uninterrupted writing and reading about construction. We brainstormed connections that we might have with people in the community who could provide us with materials or experiences that would supplement these potential interest areas. It was here that we began to enter into a collaboration with our most valuable resource, our parents.

Our informal discussions with parents revealed that they, too, were becoming aware of their children's intense interest in construction. It had become a source of conversation in the car and at the dinner table. They began to search for materials that would facilitate their children's play at home. The parents, like the teachers and the children, were learning the difference between a back hoe and a front-end loader. Although parents were not involved in the ongoing classroom process of observing and taking notes, they did collaborate with us in the observation and documentation process by taking pictures, recording conversations and transcribing stories from the home environment. Parents began setting up visits to local construction sites, contacting construction companies for donations of materials and arranging on-site visits to see heavy equipment and trucks in use.

Our classroom exploration took on various forms as the toddlers worked across different types of media. In order to support a play-based project like this one, we introduced materials that would facilitate dramatic play such as trucks, tools, work gloves and hard hats. We also provided cardboard tubes and blocks that could be used to simulate sewer pipe and concrete molds like the ones they were seeing on our former playground or anything else they wanted to build. Back hoes beeped their way through flour, sand, water and paint. Dump trucks were filled with Play dough "debris" and flubber, with its capacity to stretch and swing, became a crane that lifted and moved materials. In addition, we appropriated an unplanted flower bed outside our back door and turned it into a construction site.

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Photograph courtesy of Michele Sanderson

As we continued to observe and record the work of the children in all of these areas, we considered what form our documentation should take. The depth of the children's interest and the magnitude of the parents' involvement convinced us that our documentation must be in a form that would be easily accessible to both. Soon after the project began, we started to create a large book that could be used by the children in the classroom as well as taken home to be shared with parents, grandparents and neighbors. The book contained photographic documentation of the demolition of our playground, campus walks to various construction sites, classroom activities, and construction play on the classroom site and at home. The text was drawn from transcriptions of the children's conversations both at home and at school, as well as teachers' descriptions of the project work. Many proud parents borrowed the books to share in the workplace and with friends and relatives.

Developing this documentation as the project progressed gave us several advantages. The children and teachers were able to sit down together and revisit our construction experiences. As the toddlers recounted what they remembered and enjoyed, they reinforced their existing knowledge and built on newly generated ideas. The teachers were able to use this information to plan further provocation and support the children's interests. Parents were brought into their children's daily experience in a very real way.

• • •
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*The toddlers also brought
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 to six months, into the project
 by enthusiastically sharing
 their toys and demonstrating
 just how they worked.*

— Michele Sanderson

• • •

Our curriculum came alive for them and opened their eyes to the strength and capability of their very young children. The ongoing documentation engaged all of us — children, teachers and parents.

As the construction on campus began to wind down, so did the children's interest. It seemed to draw to a natural conclusion as orange barrels and fences disappeared, and the campus returned to normal. Pointing out to us that the construction was over, one toddler insisted that we take a picture of the downed fencing as it lay next to the sidewalk. Seeing this as a final step in the construction process, the children asked to take down the fence that surrounded our flower bed construction site. Our project was coming to an end. However, the effect on our curriculum and our image of the child was long lasting. The vitality and longevity of this project reinforced the positive aspects of project work and made us more fully aware of the benefits for all those involved.

The Benefits

One immediate benefit was the strengthening of our sense of community and an emphasis on the role of all three protagonists in the educational process. Significant learning relationships developed reciprocally among children, parents and teachers. Each acted as a support for the other and as a co-constructor of knowledge, bringing new ideas and observations to the learning process. This work involved every member of our classroom

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community from the youngest to the oldest child, from the least involved to the most involved families.

We found a second benefit as project work supported the best aspects of our mixed-age program. Children acted as tutors for their peers, giving them the latest information on construction and encouraging their participation in all aspects of the project. Older toddlers took on leadership responsibilities as they constructed dramatic play opportunities and stimulated ongoing interest in construction. Younger children in the class, although they might not have the ability yet to design the play, could take full advantage of participating in established play patterns and ideas. They were more than happy to engage with their older, more knowledgeable classmates. The toddlers also brought the babies, ages three and six months, into the project by enthusiastically sharing their toys and demonstrating just how they worked. They could frequently be seen driving their back hoes and bulldozers around the soft pool where a baby rested or pointing out the finer points of construction work to the babies on our campus walks.

Involvement in this project was beneficial to the children's development in several ways. The children's self-worth was enhanced because they saw that their interests were valued and supported by our curriculum offerings as their curiosity about construction influenced every aspect of our classroom life. Additionally, the strength of their interest called for an extensive investigation that moved at their pace, respecting their sense of time and allowing them to experience all aspects of their construction ideas to their fullest extent. Friendships were formed and strengthened through shared interest in construction and the resulting dramatic play opportunities.

The partnership that teachers form with children in the learning process was clearly highlighted in the Construction Project. In the past, our project work had generally been materials-based. In these projects, we felt that we had a solid knowledge of the materials and the ways in which they could be used. However, in the Construction Project, we found ourselves out of our element. We knew very little about heavy construction equipment and the inner workings of a construction site. As the project progressed, we found that in supporting the children's interests, we supported and expanded our information base, too. This became an opportunity for us to participate as co-constructors of knowledge in ways

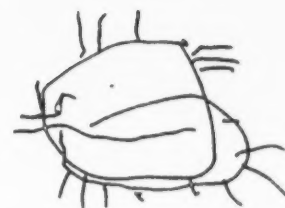
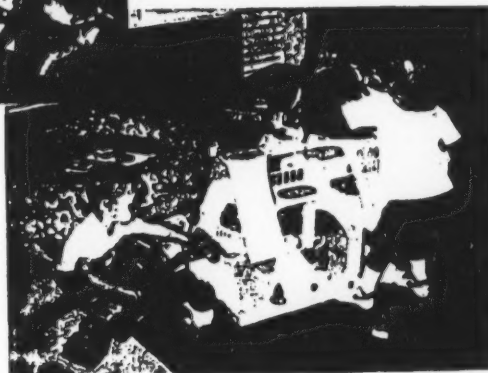
that we had not experienced before and gave us a deeper understanding of our role as educators.

As members of a teaching team, we also received benefits from our participation in this project. The children's strong focus demanded that we have an equally strong focus. We collaborated on every aspect of the project from observation to planning to documentation. In this process, we were able to share our unique points of view while still leaving room for disagreement. We discovered each other's strengths and weaknesses and provided support to each other throughout the entire process. This collaboration involved both full-time teachers and graduate assistants in the room as well as the program director and curriculum director. Our work on the Construction Project gave all of us new opportunities for discussion and cooperation which served to enhance and energize our working relationships.

Another benefit was the strengthened home/school connection. In a small program such as ours, we have always had active parent involvement as well as a strong commitment to communication between parents and staff. Parents accompany us on field trips, donate time and materials, and actively participate in our Parent Council. However, we had never experienced such a direct and overwhelming response to our curriculum. The strong interest of the children and the curriculum support that they were receiving at school carried the Construction Project right into their homes. The children repeatedly pointed out construction equipment to their parents as they drove around town.



Photographs courtesy of Michele Sanderson



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An increased level of communication and ease of conversation helped establish an ongoing collaboration with parents on curriculum issues and family programming. Parents continue to see that their input is sought, valued and implemented in a continuous exchange of observations and ideas either informally, or through newsletters and Parent Council meetings. We seek their input, and they readily give it.

- Michele Sanderson

• • •



They made up stories and asked to set up construction sites in their living rooms. As parents began to relay these stories to us, we saw an opportunity to involve them in the documentation process. We sent home tape recorders and cameras with parents so that they were able to record their children's stories, conversations and play experiences within the home context. As their texts and pictures became part of our documentation, the parents saw, in the same way the children do, that their efforts and interest were valued. They became contributors to the curriculum, members of our teaching team. The partnerships that developed through this process lasted long after the Construction Project had ended. An increased level of communication and ease of conversation helped establish an ongoing collaboration with parents on curriculum issues and family programming. Parents continue to see that their input is sought, valued and implemented in a continuous exchange of observations and ideas either formally, or through newsletters and Parent Council meetings. We seek their input, and they readily give it.

Finally, as we reflected on the process and the outcomes of our Construction Project, we saw how well our theory and our practice blended to create a stronger image of the child. The benefits of project work, which our colleagues from Reggio had so well defined for us, began unfolding before our eyes. What we believe about the social construction of knowledge was played out again and again in various configurations of the child/child, child/teacher, child/parent, parent/teacher and teacher/teacher relationships. Working together, we built a knowledge base that sustained and supported the children's interest for six months. We were reminded, too, of the importance of a play-based curriculum. We observed the children using their construction play to imitate what they were seeing in the world outside our classroom, thereby gaining a better understanding of that world. Through these processes, our image of the child was enriched and strengthened. We came to see our infants and toddlers in a new light: as more thoughtful, more focused and more competent investigators than we had imagined. Not only did project work serve to enhance our image of the child, but it also supported our professional growth and strengthened the quality of life in our classroom. ■

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The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit Tour Schedule

March 25, 1999 - October 2000

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• Oakland, CA 94613 • (510) 430-3105 or

430-2019 voice • Fax (510) 430-3233

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What's in the future for "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit?

In its 11 years on the road in the North America, the exhibition has visited 34 cities in 22 states, and D.C. in the United States and Canada. From March 1999 to October 2000, it will be housed at Mills College, where initiatives for professional development for educators will be organized by Reggio Children and the Innovative Teacher Project.

Reggio Children has developed an updated version of the exhibit and in order to support this effort, has launched a major fundraising campaign in collaboration with RISE (Resources and Instruction for Staff Excellence, Inc.), a non-profit organization dedicated to excellence in early childhood education. If you are interested in supporting this new exhibition, join other active friends of the project by supplying names of potential sponsors or by sending a donation to RISE at (800) 971-RISE (7473). Thank you for your valuable support.

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MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, S.R.L.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education.

We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether nonprofit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, phone: 011-39-522-435416, fax: 011-39-522-435621.

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of *Innovations* to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.

An Aesthetic Encounter at Virginia Tech:
Recasting the Reggio Emilia Approach to Inform Teaching in the United States • Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University • Blacksburg, Virginia • Aug. 4-7, 1999 • Guest speakers include Lella Gandini, Carolyn Edwards, George Forman, Baji Rankin and Kate Wilson, Jeanne Goldhaber and Dee Smith, Aline Shafer, Debra Tegano, Victoria Fu, Andrew Stremmel and Lynn Hill.
Contact:
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Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
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An Icelandic Reggio Conference - How Do Children Learn? Three Dimensions of Learning: Children, Adults and Environment • University of Akureyri • Akureyri, Iceland • Aug. 19-20, 1999
Contact:
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Innovative Teacher Project • Mills College • Oakland, California

Professional Development Seminars:
Nov. 5-7, 1999: "Design: Metaproject for an Environment for Young Children" Presentations by the Italian designers of "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit and the Italian architects who collaborated in the new book *Children, Spaces, Relations: Metaproject for an Environment for Young Children*, as well as an atelierista and pedagogista from Reggio Emilia.

March 10-12, 2000: "Documentation and Research"
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reggio children

In the spring of 1994, the Reggio Children organization was formed in Reggio Emilia, Italy, to support the municipality's world-renowned early childhood program. The goal of Reggio Children is to disseminate the wealth of knowledge in theory and practice that has resulted from more than 30 years of experience in the education of children from 3 months to 6 years of age. Through publication and distribution of books, articles, videos and slides that document the Reggio approach, educators can learn more about these educational principles and benefit their own classrooms.

Reggio Children also responds to the increasingly numerous requests for information and cooperative exchanges that arrive from all over the world. Reggio Children is a private, for-profit company governed by a board of directors and supported by shareholders - corporate, private (parents, teachers and other citizens of Reggio Emilia), and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia which holds the majority of shares. Until now this organization has not been open to individuals outside Italy.

friends of reggio children

In memory of Loris Malaguzzi, *Friends of Reggio Children*, a non-profit, international organization, has been formed and membership is open to all. The goal of *Friends of Reggio Children* is to create an endowment that would establish a library for collecting documents about the Reggio approach and to provide funds for student research on the Reggio philosophy and principles.

Friends of Reggio Children is asking for your support. A one-time donation will entitle you to become a member of an international group who believes in the educational principles that the Reggio program exemplifies and in the right of children to obtain the best care and education possible. The association's membership fee is \$35 U.S. and can be paid by bankers draft or by bank transfer (bank account #26056/C at Cassa di Risparmio di Reggio Emilia, Piazza Battisti 1, 42100 Reggio Emilia). Members of *Friends of Reggio Children* will receive a subscription to *rechild*, the newsletter published by Reggio Children.

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WEB SITES

- Web site for the City of Reggio Emilia, Italy (Italian) <http://www.comune.re.it/>
- Home page for "Reggio Children" <http://www.re.it/>
- <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (Italian)
- <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (English)
- This page lists two pages: Reggio Children, a Cultural Project <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (Italian)
- <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (English)
- Events Arranged by Reggio Children <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (Italian)
- <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (English)
- See also: Friends of Reggio Children <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (Italian)
- <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (English)
- "Graphics and Bibliographies, data" <http://www.re.it/italia/materie/esp/ed/child.htm> (Italian)
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- ERIC/EECE Web site: <http://eric.ed.gov/>
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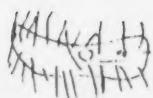
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in early education: the international reggio exchange





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Capturing Moments in the Daily Life of Children

by Amelia Gambetti

Amelia Gambetti is the Coordinator of Reggio Children and the Liaison for Consultancy in Schools. Amelia was a teacher for 25 years at La Villetta School in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and has consulted in schools, colleges and universities in the United States since 1992. The following are excerpts from her comments at the conclusion of the March Invitational, 1999 in Columbus, Ohio. Amelia and Lella Gandini, Reggio Children Liaison in the U.S. for Dissemination of the Reggio Emilia Approach, presented their experiences and reflections regarding the daily life of children in the schools in Reggio Emilia.

I am interested in your reflections about daily life in the school. What happens during the day, even a day that seems to be just the same as other days, can be full of promises. If we take the time to observe and listen to these daily events, they can become very powerful possibilities to encourage us to think and trust children. How many episodes happen in your classroom that you see or do not see?

When I was a teacher at La Villetta School in Reggio Emilia, one of my biggest daily struggles was about sharing with the parents the way in which the children were learning how to think. Quite often, parents see the child as an empty container that needs to be filled in with a lot of information and a lot of knowledge in order to support the development of his or her future learning. Sometimes parents think that real learning is when the child learns something concrete, something that can be demonstrated. My struggle was to continuously make them aware of the preciousness of children's energy.

When children struggle with solutions and come up with different kinds of strategies or theories, their brain enters into action. If your brain is active, if you think, you get a certain kind of power. When children realize that they are thinking people who have resources, then every kind of exchange can take place in their life and they are ready to actively participate in these experiences.

During my years of teaching, I felt that one of my biggest goals was to create a community of learners. This demands a continuous respect for everyone in this community. Are we respecting the intelligence of the children? Is this viable? If we don't believe in their intelligence, if we don't acknowledge it, how can the parents understand the importance of the experiences we are having with the children? I have learned to seek intelligence, to seek situations where people think. When we think, we find solutions because we elaborate what we have in front of us. This is not only about school. It's also about

[Editor's note: This issue focuses on the "March Invitational," a conference in March 1999 sponsored by the Ohio Department of Early Education, Division of Early Childhood Education and the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation. This working conference of U.S. adaptations and interpretations of the Reggio Emilia approach to education was organized by Margie Cooper, project coordinator of the NAEYC 2000 Project in Atlanta, Ga., and Sandy Miller, consultant at the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education. More than 150 teachers from across the United States participated in this collaborative effort, sharing presentations of their experiences in five different sessions focused on environment, documentation, relationships and collegiality. Amelia Gambetti, coordinator of Reggio Children and the liaison for consultancy in schools, and Lella Gandini, liaison in the U.S. for dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach, also participated in this conference. The purpose of this conference was to provide a framework within which multiple perspectives are heard. The schedule was designed to balance presentation, listening, response and dialogue. Participants were encouraged to express themselves and their work, and to respond openly with others. This issue begins to explore the experience of this conference and the work of the children, teachers and parents in the communities represented. Future issues of *Innovations* will include other presentations shared at this conference.]

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The drawings in this issue were created by four- and five-year-old children at Chicago's Commonweal Child Development Program in New City, NY. These drawings were part of a project titled, "Ages, Landing Back at When We Were Babies, and in the Future When We Are Older."

Please note that unless from another print communication from the office of Reggio Children, the views expressed are those of the individual contributors representing their own interpretations of the Reggio approach at this point in time. We welcome a diversity of opinions and do not attempt to prove or disprove them as the voice of Reggio.

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our daily life, about being with our family and our friends. On the first day of this conference, I asked, "Do you document your life?" By that I meant, "Do you live your life? Do you know what you do day by day? Are you aware of why you make the choices and decisions that you make?" Personally, I want to be aware of every single choice of my life, because I believe in the power of intelligence. Because of the work I do, I have the responsibility to share this with others, with the children, with the parents, with the other teachers. This is something that really goes beyond Reggio. It is about thinking. Perhaps Reggio offers an experience with which we can demonstrate that through our 36 years of experience, we have evolved because we have thought many times about the episodes, the many details of our lives and we have learned to be critical of ourselves and each other. We continue with our criticism because we understand that if we do not see where the problems are, we cannot build on our experience.

.....

When I was 19, I was hired in the second school opened in Reggio Emilia, the Anna Frank School. At that time, I was with Loris Malaguzzi [founder of the Reggio Emilia Municipal Early Childhood Program] almost every day because we had only two schools in Reggio. When Malaguzzi came to the school and asked me questions, I often didn't have an answer. He said, "You know, I don't think you've thought enough. Do you think sometimes?" And I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "Well, I don't know because when I ask a question, you don't have an answer." So I said, "Okay, I will observe more." That was a key

point: I will observe more. At the time, we didn't have that many documents or tools for documentation in our centers. But we had traces of our experiences up on the wall. We had to develop the intuition for making our work visible

and tangible, for the children, for the parents, for ourselves. We also had to develop the important concepts of visibility, transparency, circularity and reciprocity in relationship to our work, but first we had to understand what observation meant.

Revisiting myself, observing myself was a part of my work in Reggio, but I discovered it more clearly when I began to work in other countries, the United States, for example. I didn't have many anchors then, because I didn't have my colleagues with me. I was by myself, so I had to find many memories inside myself and I had to revisit my experience. I remember when I was in Amherst, Mass., I literally spent nights writing down all the episodes that came to my mind in order to make comparisons with the new episodes I had experienced there. By that time, I was observing

myself continuously. This observation helped me to develop a certain kind of attitude, the desire to be aware of everything. It is a right that I had and that I still have. I think it is a right of the children to have a person nearby who knows them, and is

also able to step back and observe. From my point of view, this person has the responsibility to share observations with the children in order to support their observations. I think that this kind of attitude has stayed with me. It makes me feel good sometimes and sometimes I get discouraged. Sometimes I say, "It's too much. I cannot do it." But I still continue to nourish this kind of attitude. As educators, we must have the desire to continuously document what we see because, in this way, we are observing what is crossing our path. Then it is our choice, as teachers, how to intervene, what to document, what to make visible and what to keep visible only to ourselves. One of my biggest

fears is the possibility of not seeing what is around me. My biggest fear is the possibility of the life around me becoming invisible.

"Are we respecting the intelligence of the children? Is this visible? If we don't believe in their intelligence, if we don't acknowledge it, how can the parents understand the importance of the experiences we are having with children?"

— Amelia Gambetti



At 10 years old, I am going to play at the swings and slide. I'm not going to be afraid to play in the park.



When I am 5, I get taller than my father.



I'm 4 years old and I was at the school here. I go to the other school, close to Lupe's there is one school. I goin to play at the swing and the slide and at the school is one table for drawing and color papers.



My hands (arms) were little at 1 years old than when I was 3 years old. When I was 1 year old I only walk and at 3 years old I could run.



Building Environments: An Exploration of the Possibilities an Environment Can Provide

by Lynn White

Lynn White is a first grade teacher at Greeley Elementary School in Winnetka, Ill. The following is an excerpt from her presentation at the March Invitational, 1999 in Columbus, Ohio. Lynn's presentation was one of three presented by teachers from schools across the United States during the session titled, "Building Environments." Lynn participated in a study tour to Reggio Emilia in May 1991.

While reflecting on the role of the environment in supporting the potential of children, I began to look more carefully at the idea of emergent curriculum and how the structure and the organization of the environment, the image of the child and the relationships within the environment are key ingredients for reaching the potential of children. I have found that whenever I allow something to emerge in my classroom, it makes me feel very uncertain because I'm really not sure which way our experience should go. Even though I have a prediction or plan, the learning always goes much further than I would have ever imagined or than I would have ever expected. This idea of beginning by drawing a plan is an example of *progettazione* which comes from the idea of projecting in action. It refers to making a prediction that can be flexibly adjusted. As a result of my new understandings, I wanted to look more carefully at the power of emergent curriculum, environments and the teacher's role ... what we can do to support children, to work with them and their ideas.

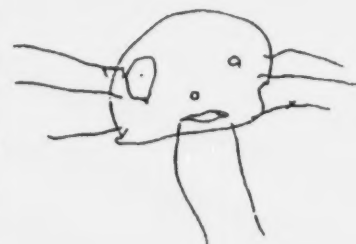
I began by reflecting back to a recent conversation I had with the colleagues I met during a study tour to Reggio Emilia in 1991. Dan Scheinfeld of the Erikson Institute in Chicago, Karen Haigh from Chicago Commons, Fran Donovan, who was at the Kohl Children's Museum in Chicago at that time, and I have been meeting together regularly ever since meeting in Reggio and have had ongoing conversations about our work, our thinking and our reflections about Reggio ideas. During one of these discussions, Dan said: "The pivotal issue in the ultimate expression of creativity for children is that he or she experiences, that he or she exists in our minds." He's talking about the relationship that we have with children. I see the environment offering new possibilities for relationships that I may not have realized before I went to Reggio. Dan went on to say, "It is what we say, what is in our eyes, our joy in their self-expression that leads children to know that they exist in our minds." When children feel that they exist in our minds, it creates the potential for us to work together and to think together in ways that perhaps we haven't examined before. I feel that these ideas about relationship within the context of the environment are fundamental in our work with children.

I went on to talk with several colleagues who include emergent curriculum in their work or have definite ideas about emergent curriculum: from Winnetka, Janet Aliapoulos, an elementary school teacher, Chuck Meyers, a social studies teacher and Sylvia Meyers, a reading specialist, as well as Dan Scheinfeld. Then I had a conversation with Lella Gandini about her thoughts on emergent curriculum during one of her visits to Winnetka. I put some of our ideas together to share with you. Perhaps they might help us to think in new ways about emergent curriculum and what possibilities we offer to children.

Here is a definition that we educators all seemed to agree on: Emergent curriculum is curriculum that starts with a seed in an educator's mind, but only grows when it is constructed with the ideas of children. So perhaps the seed would be an observation, something in which you would see children participating, something that comes from a conversation with children or a conversation among children you might overhear. There are many places for that seed to start, but it does need to be in an educator's mind in order for that educator to move into action, to take a step and move forward. Emergent curriculum offers generative learning for both the child and the teacher. Teachers learn with children and also learn about children. Children learn with the teacher and other children, and they also learn about learning, which we know as metacognition.

I'd like to point out some of the observations about emergent curriculum that we've observed over time and found to be consistent in our work. First, emergent curriculum can generate other curriculum. Oftentimes, if there's a project that's occurring in the classroom, a smaller, mini-project can occur. Another observation is that assessment is on-site and ongoing, and not just the end result. Emergent curriculum is a process. It begins with what we have observed, an interest or a motivation, which creates the investment for the idea, the interest or the motivation. We investigate predictions and there's no pre-planned limit. There are just possibilities. The children's learning always goes further than the prediction, and there seems to be much depth in the learning process. Basic skill development

At 4 years old, you play
hard games and do cartwheels



At 3 years old you play with
baby toys. Play games all by
myself. Cause I was little,
a baby when I was 3.
Play cars, play trucks.



1 years old, you play
by yourself.

ISRAEL

is vital and always a part of a naturally-occurring process.

For us, the key elements of emergent curriculum are: 1) the power of questions; 2) the power of conversation to share points of view, to construct awareness of different points of view and to co-construct knowledge; and 3) the power of assessment in the process. We've observed that children are empowered in their learning if a connection is made by one child or between children. Emergent curriculum takes twists and turns depending on the children's response. That's the whole idea of not having a fixed plan, of not having it all thought out. The children's response provides the stepping stones for future experiences with them. We think that these key ingredients are vital when creating a community of learners in the classroom. They help to solidify learning in a very supportive way. With emergent curriculum, you value what the children do, think, wonder about and know. The children are aware of your respect which also opens the door for higher-level thinking and higher-level work together. We feel that it's important to remember that children can and should be held accountable for their knowledge in developmentally appropriate ways, by communicating their knowledge throughout an experience and representing their knowledge in different languages. This is very important for their own learning and the learning of others. Emergent curriculum must have an underlying structure even though flexibility and uncertainty are present. When I first started to try to let things emerge in my classroom, it created a very uncomfortable place for me. But I've always seen the depth of what can happen if you share with your colleagues, document the experiences, observe the children closely, rely on your intuition and think about the ideas from the children's point of view. These are all things that have helped me to stay with this feeling of uncer-

tainly, to move on, to continue the work and to grow in the learning process. As Dan Scheinfeld says, "The structure underneath emergent curriculum liberates the spirit and crystallizes each stage of the process."

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"With emergent curriculum, you value what the children do, think, wonder about and know. The children are aware of your respect which also opens the door for higher-level thinking and higher-level work together."

~ Lynn White

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We also talked about the teacher's role in an environment where emergent curriculum can occur. Teachers need to think about what messages the classroom environment gives and answer these questions: What am I offering in the environment that invites children to explore their interests, connect it into their learning, construct and co-construct their knowledge, represent and communicate this knowledge? Teachers must reflect on how they can help children to narrow down their motivations to a highly energized focus where learning and skill work are integrated. This is a very big challenge, but it is so rewarding for everyone involved. We feel that teachers need to observe closely and document experiences, then reflect on those observations when planning future experiences and interactions. This helps us know where to go or what to do, and how to look at and offer other possibilities. We need to be developmentally conscious in our work and ready to embrace the children's motivations. We need to prepare for possibilities so we will be aware when they present themselves. We need to reflect on this question: How do I support relationships, interaction and communication in the learning process?

Then we thought about what we need to do as teachers in order to try to work in some of these ways. We feel that teachers must be open to the possibilities, willing to take the risk and to work in uncertainty. We need to think about our time and the organization of our day in new ways. We need to become resourceful with the use of our time. We have to be willing to look at the time of children in new ways, to stay with children in their learning and reflect on our own interactions with children to facilitate the co-construction of knowledge. Finally, we need to be willing to continuously reflect on these questions: How do children think? How do children come to know? ■

A Map of Interest in the Reggio Emilia Approach in the United States and Canada

During the Reggio Children Summer Institute in July 1998, Lella Gandini, Liaison in the U.S. for Dissemination of the Reggio Emilia Approach, initiated a survey regarding interest in the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy. Lella asked institute participants four questions about their knowledge of the Reggio approach and interest in their community. Following the institute, the survey was posted on the Reggio listserve. Responses were compiled by Judith Kaminsky, editor of *Innovations*.

We would like to invite the readers of *Innovations* to respond to these questions in order for educators in Reggio and North America to have a better understanding of interest in the Reggio educational philosophy in the United States and Canada. Once responses from *Innovations* readers and NAEYC annual conference participants are compiled, an issue of *Innovations* will focus on these results and other information about interest in this educational approach including study tours and network groups.

Responses to the following questions can be sent to Judith Allen Kaminsky, Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University, 71 E. Ferry Ave., Detroit, MI 48202, Fax 313/577-0995, e-mail: j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu

1. Are there schools in your area (in your state) that are studying and trying to adapt the Reggio Emilia approach?
2. Are there teachers that get together to discuss and reflect on the theory and practice introduced by educators from Reggio Emilia?
3. Are there conferences, lectures, courses taught in colleges, community colleges or universities?
4. Are you familiar with any publications, articles, etc. about the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Building Collegiality: Reflections on Organizational Structure, Collaboration and the Impact of Role Definition, Motivation and Leadership on Collegiality

by Karen Haigh

Karen is director of the Chicago Commons Child Development Program in Chicago, Ill. The following is an excerpt of her presentation at the March Invitational, 1999 in Columbus, Ohio. Karen and Dorothy Kelsie-Miller, the site director at Chicago Commons New City program, were one of four groups of American educators who contributed to the session titled, "Building Collegiality." Karen has participated in three study tours to Reggio Emilia.

It has been a particular challenge for me to think about the development of collegiality at Chicago Commons. I recall once saying to Lella Gandini that our staff hasn't had time to focus on collaboration like we have other elements such as the image of the child, the environment, children's languages, documentation, parent participation, emergent curriculum and professional development. In response, Lella exclaimed, "Oh, but you have been working on collaboration!" I realized that although we weren't intentionally focusing on collegiality, it was embedded in our work together. In preparation for this presentation, I have had to really think about what words like collegiality and collaboration mean and how they relate to Chicago Commons.

In the dictionary, the word collegiality expresses the idea of equal authority or a collective. The definition of the word collaboration expresses the idea of working together for a common end or goal. For the word colleague, the dictionary offers the idea of being united with another person who is in a similar position. Each of these words have interesting meanings for Chicago Commons.

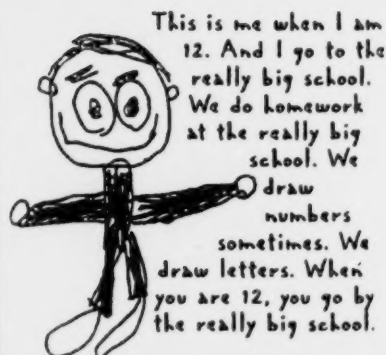
Chicago Commons' staff encompasses a range of positions including maintenance workers, food aides, teacher aides, teacher assistants, head teachers, family worker aides, family worker assistants, head family workers, clerks, administrative assistants, assistant directors, site directors, coordinators and a program director. How can all these people work with equal authority toward a common goal? Furthermore, our staff members must answer to and comply with a range of bureaucracies, including the Federal Department of Health and Human Services-Region V, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services-Licensing Bureau, the Chicago Department of Human Services-Children's Services Division, the Chicago Department of Revenue and Licensing, the State Board of Education-Child Care Food Program, and the Chicago Public Schools. How can these same people, whose work involves so much accountability to others, work collectively toward a common goal? One might think that collegiality and collaboration would be impossible for us under these circumstances, but exploring Reggio is about possibilities not impossibilities. At Chicago Commons, we have really constructed our means of collegiality and collaboration. Our collegiality and collaboration has developed in subtle ways, as it has become embedded throughout our daily work in exploring Reggio. Yet although it is very subtle, it is also very powerful and strong.

Collegiality and collaboration have been woven into our exploration of Reggio and its elements. Although collegiality is common at Chicago Commons, its subtlety makes it difficult to notice unless one makes a special effort. Some examples of ways we have experienced collegiality and collaboration are:

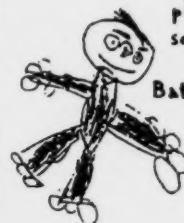
1. watching together videos and slides of children in order to notice children's abilities and interests.
2. planning, discussing, debating and making changes in the environments (i.e., developing environment plans with central office staff and each site that examine the entire building including bathrooms, hallways, entrances/exits, etc.).
3. working to read and interpret many languages together or exploring materials together.
4. gathering, assembling and presenting children's work together (i.e., sharing documentation between sites).
5. exploring and projecting possible ideas and activities for children and teachers (emergent curriculum, i.e., allowing teams to have their own explorations so each site develops research questions to explore).
6. meeting with parents to hear their voice, to hear their hopes and dreams, or to enter into a dialogue by thinking about questions like: What is our image of the child? What is the public school's image of the child? What is society's image of the child? or What should children learn and who decides what children should learn?
7. meeting together weekly, monthly and annually to engage in dialogue, to reflect, plan and make decisions together, to truly listen to each other.

Some of my thoughts or reflections on the essential elements of collegiality and collaboration are:

1. Having a common goal or purpose — At Chicago Commons, there is a particularly strong emphasis on supporting the child and his or her potential, and how quality programming and program improvement relates to that. When there is a common goal or sense of purpose, staff are more cohesive and invested in spite of many differences.
2. Meeting together and regularly.
3. Doing something together — We cannot just talk about experiences; we need to actually have them together.
4. Allowing time to reflect or time to revisit at meetings.
5. Thinking of ways to be inclusive — including staff like maintenance workers or food aides by inviting them to see staff presentations on exploring materials.



That's me, I'm 4 years old. I'm bigger than 2 years old. I can draw and read books and play cars and go to school and run real fast and ride my Batman bike. I got it for my birthday.



I'm a baby. When you are a baby you drink a bottle.

JOSEPH

6. Valuing and having ongoing dialogue.
7. Having unequal positions and equal voices at the same time.
8. Having leadership that is connected and involved with staff.
9. Having leadership and staff give input together.
10. Developing and supporting the individual and group simultaneously (i.e., sharing and documenting our individual ideas in a group book, especially when we go to seminars and conferences).
11. Having many ways for people to collaborate: children and children; children and teachers; teachers and parents; children and parents; teachers, directors, coordinators and family workers; coordinators and directors; all staff.
12. Having hopes and dreams for the future is essential (i.e., some of our future hopes for collegiality and collaboration are: having an ongoing exchange with other programs like Winnetka and teachers from Detroit and Columbus, children sharing their perspective and working with adults more collaboratively).

When we began exploring the Reggio philosophy, our organizational structure included an education coordinator, myself and seven teaching teams who, in time, attended agency in-services and team consultations every week as well as monthly meetings regarding our work with children in the classroom and their families. Our organizational structure has evolved considerably since then. We have developed an organizational structure that creates a system of support for collegiality and collaboration. As a

result of exploring Reggio, Commons has developed a more integrated, comprehensive organizational structure with emphasis on staff development. The main components of the organizational structure include:

1. Coordinator meetings to reflect and plan weekly meetings, monthly meetings, agency in-services, environment plans, etc.
2. Director meetings which now occur every two weeks. We also have an annual retreat in order to hear the directors' perspective and input regarding direction and follow through, and also to discuss values, purpose and mission.
3. Agency meetings and in-services in order to experience a more intense review of the focus for the year, reflect on our past and make plans to build the future, capture dialogue and experience materials.
4. Team meetings to make connections with Reggio principles, to hear the voice of staff, to bridge the gap between agency goals and individual goals when exploring Reggio, to help teaching teams with the focus and to get input from teams — time to plan and reflect together.
5. Monthly meetings to follow up on the focus for the year, to connect with other sites and colleagues, to think together.
6. Reggio workshops/seminars to provoke new thinking and understanding, to be nourished and stimulated in exploring Reggio, and to share ideas and revisit them (documentation of staff's ideas).

7. Reggio consultations with Lella Gandini and Amelia Gambetti for advice, guidance and thought.
8. Staff presentations to each other and to outside agencies/programs.

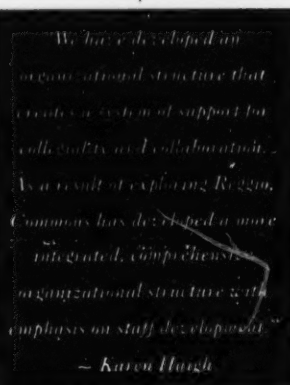
Exploring Reggio through staff development is grounded in opportunities for all staff to work together, with ongoing dialogue and reflection. Each of these activities allow and support collaboration and collegiality.

I have realized how all the components of the Reggio philosophy are interrelated, which helps me to realize how all of the relationships are interconnected. There is not just one key person exploring Reggio at Chicago Commons. There is a group of people who are learning and working together constantly, depending on each other for reflection, direction, connection and support in our exploration. Not one of us would be able to explore and discover Reggio the way we have without the rest of us. What's important is not what kind of staff or how many positions there are in a program, but what is done with the positions and staff that exist. I wouldn't suggest others try to copy our structure, rather I would encourage others to discover what structure they can build together that works for them and their circumstances, their resources, their positions, their administration, etc.

Some say that this country has a stronger emphasis on the individual rather than the group. I don't know how true that is considering our public schools, where most children are treated as if they are exactly the same and there is very little respect for individual children. There seems to be so many dichotomies that have been created in learning and education: the individual

vs. the group, the child's choice vs. the teacher's choice, child initiated vs. teacher initiated, process vs. product, the administration vs. the teachers, the parent's agenda vs. the teacher's agenda, etc. Why do we create all these divisions? Is it because it's much easier to see things in black and white, and separately? Maybe we shouldn't create this either/or world but instead, more of a balanced world with possibilities for both the individual and the group; the child's interests and teacher's interests; the process and the product; and where the administration, teachers and parents are valued and supported as they work together.

When thinking about the meaning behind the name Commons, its founder, Graham Taylor said, "Underlying the word 'Commons' and its many derivatives is the idea of sharing what each can be to all and what all can be to each, what belongs to no person or class exclusively, but to everyone, to the whole people of the community." I think we have built and continue to build a community of people who have an ongoing dialogue where there is support, challenge, reflection and action around learning for adults and children. When asked what keeps us going, I would have to say there are two related factors: ideas and relationships to act upon. As a result of our experiences, our accomplishments, our frustrations, our questions, our hopes and our lives with children and families, we have created our own culture.



— Karen Hough

The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit Tour Schedule

March 25, 1999 – October 2000
Mills College, Oakland, Calif.

Contact: Susan Lyon

Innovative Teacher Project

Mills College • 5000 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94613 • (510) 430-3105 or
Voice 430-2019 • Fax (510) 430-3233
e-mail: slyon@mills.edu

What's in the Future for "The Hundred Languages of Children" Exhibit?

In its 11 years on the road in North America, the exhibition has visited 34 cities in 22 states and D.C. in the United States and in Canada. From March 1999 to October 2000, it will be housed at Mills College, where initiatives for professional development for educators will be organized by Reggio Children and the Innovative Teacher Project.

From November 2000 until the end of December 2000, the exhibit will be in Atlanta, GA, in connection with the NAEYC annual conference. For further information, contact Margie Cooper, project coordinator of the NAEYC 2000 Project, 2040 Wilson Ridge Ct., Roswell, GA 30075, 770/552-0757, Fax: 770/552-0179, e-mail: margie.cooper@mindspring.com

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*Temporary address for three years, beginning August 20, 1998**

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Liaison in the U.S. for the exhibit "The Hundred Languages of Children"
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An Aesthetic Encounter at Virginia Tech: Recasting the Reggio Emilia Approach to Inform Teaching in the United States

by Victoria R. Fu and Lynn T. Hill

Victoria Fu is professor of child development and Lynn Hill is instructor and curriculum coordinator in the Department of Family and Child Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va. Victoria and Lynn participated in the May 1997 Reggio Emilia study tour and the 1998 Winter Institute in Reggio Emilia, Italy. In August 1999, Virginia Tech sponsored a conference titled, "Recasting the Reggio Emilia Approach to Inform Teaching in the United States." The following are Victoria and Lynn's reflections about that experience.

How can we share with you the profound image of an encounter of learners, who were cast together for a few days in time, living and learning in the company of each other? How can we tell this story – a short, edited documentation – so you can savor the experiences, knowledge and reflections that provoked all of us, and continue to challenge us to recast the Reggio Emilia approach to inform teaching in the United States? With these questions in mind, we invite you to go back in time and place to August 4-7, 1999, in Blacksburg, to revisit the conference, "An Aesthetic Encounter at Virginia Tech: Recasting the Reggio Emilia Approach to Inform Teaching in the United States."

The air was filled with excitement and anticipation when more than 220 participants arrived on campus from all over the U.S. and many other countries, including Australia, Japan, Israel and a large delegation from South Korea. The presenters and participants were all actively engaged in renewing friendships and making connections with new friends. This spirit of relationship was weaving its way among us and lasted throughout our stay together.

We planned this conference in the hope that the beautiful mountains of Virginia and our town's annual street fair, "Steppin' Out," would provide a setting that reflected the notion of aesthetics in teaching, learning and living in general. "Steppin' Out" would offer music, arts, crafts, food and people from all walks of life and could help conference participants gain an appreciation of the importance of culture and community as we reinvent the Reggio Emilia approach. That is, while learning from Reggio, we must always keep our eyes on the social, historical and cultural context in which we live. For environment and space, as Lella Gandini says, "... in many ways reflects the culture of the people who create it and on careful examination, reveals even distinct layers of this cultural influence." (1999, p. 168)

A pre-conference day was dedicated to introducing those who are new to the Reggio philosophy to principles basic to the approach. Lynn Hill shepherded the conferees through these first steps, beginning with a slide presentation that provided both visual images and narratives for reflection. The participants had opportunities to further explore these learnings as they visited the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School and dialogued over lunch at the university's Duck Pond. Small groups were formed, based on shared interest, to explore and to document learning processes. Carolyn Edwards challenged the groups to go deeper into their respective topics of exploration. At the end of the afternoon, the groups documented their emergent learnings in multiple languages. These documented

experiences were awesome and provocative. The works were made visible, displayed on the stage of the auditorium, through the rest of the conference to afford revisiting, further reflecting and reconstructing by all. Changing thoughts were shared with the whole group on the last day of the conference. One of the provocative representations was from the members of a South Korean delegation. They used recycled materials coupled with traditional Korean clothing, song, dance, mime and narration. Due to their limited knowledge of the English language, they were challenged to use multiple languages to learn and to share their learnings with others!

The conference program sought to build connections between the rich program and approach from Reggio Emilia with innovative implementation of the Reggio Emilia approach in the U.S. We were fortunate to have Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini and George Forman, co-editors of the book, *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach - Advanced Reflections*. They talked about the discussion on quality which is taking place in Italy and in Europe. George shared his expertise on the use of technology to support documentation. Lella and Carolyn explored the role relationship plays in a teaching, learning community in their sessions, "The Teacher and the Atelista" and "Creating Caring and Teaching Relationships in the Infant/Toddler Centers."

Vickie Fu challenged us to re-examine the art of teaching in "Constructing a Pedagogy of Possibilities Through Arts and Aesthetics." She noted that the words "recasting" and "aesthetics" in the title of the conference were purposefully and thoughtfully selected. These concepts embrace the ideas of teaching as an art and an appreciation for the aesthetics in good teaching, i.e., to value and love the beauty of teaching well. In adapting the Reggio Emilia approach in the U.S., we need to re-invent it, to make it our own and revisit the art of teaching. Teaching means change and, as teachers, we bear the responsibility to reconstruct ourselves in our ongoing journey to teach. In the process, while keeping our eyes on the Reggio Emilia approach, we need to go outside its boundaries to create new possibilities for teaching and learning. Vickie invited the conferees to be members of "a new cast" to participate in the drama of reconstructing the Reggio Emilia approach in the social, cultural and political realities of our respective communities to inform teaching.

Who is the child? What is a child? What does it mean to be a child? These are questions raised by Andrew Stremmel [director, Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School] in "The Image of the Child: Cultural Construction of Childhood." He

asserted that our image of the child is influenced by larger cultural, social, historical, political and economic factors, in addition to our ideological constructions. We cannot see children from a strictly developmental point of view if we wish to understand them more fully. Andy shared stories for illustration and to relate to what both Carla Rinaldi [director of the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools and Pedagogical Consultant for Reggio Children] and Sergio Spaggiari [Education Department Director for City of Reggio Emilia] have said, "Knowledge of the child comes from being with them."

Alise Shafer, director of the Evergreen Community School in Santa Monica, Calif., in "Ordinary Moments, Extraordinary Possibilities," examined the paradigm shifts she and her staff experienced as they considered the Reggio Emilia approach and its application in their own cultural context. In their initial long term project, inspired by the video, "An Amusement Park for Birds," they were moved away from what they sought most strongly – to listen to children, understand their intent and support their interests. Upon realizing that they had become side-tracked from the fundamental dictum, to listen, these long term projects brought them back to look more closely at the daily, ordinary moments – moments that have great potential when recognized by a teacher and when they are used to scaffold learning.

Baji Rankin and Kate Wilson presented, "Discovering the Language of the Arts: Children Exploring Their Inner Voices," their project at Manzanita Early Learning Center at the University of New Mexico with a group of 4- and 5-year-old children exploring symbolic language through the arts. The process began with a question, "What is art?" and "Where does art come from?" One child brought in a Picasso book with the Guernica painting. This sparked a dialogue and inquiry that lasted several months. The project showed the strengths, capabilities and incredible desire of children to express themselves through the arts. Viewing art as a vehicle for language and communication opens doors for children to express what is in their hearts and minds, builds a sense of community within the group and offers teachers provocation for deep reflection on fostering the spirit of the child within the context of school. A discussion followed on the reciprocity and creativity that was awakened in all participants, the children, families and teachers.

Dee Smith and Jeanne Goldhaber at the University of Vermont, in "The Role of the Documentation Process in Teacher Education" shared their investigation of the role that documentation plays in teacher education and professional development. Their study over eight years has led them to understand the documentation process as a cycle of inquiry which must be embedded in a collaborative context. Time and space also play a significant role in teachers' and children's engagement in this intellectually and emotionally engaging practice. Their experience suggests that the process of documentation can challenge attitudes and values about the role of children in our society, and can be an effective agent of change. In "Documenting to Understand and to be Understood," Dee and Jeanne shared the conceptualization of the documentation process guided by an investigation of clay involving children from 18 months to 2 1/2 years of age. They found toddlers exploring the clay's physical properties as well as many mathematical concepts such as weight, balance, sorting and reversibility. The toddlers' representational abilities with the clay centered around "romancing" and "reading off" the

material (Golomb, 1974). They learned that the manner in which the clay was presented and group size influenced the quality of the children's exploration and the depth of their collaborative interactions. Most importantly, they were reminded of the significance of close observation, for the very young children's conceptual understanding often exceeded their ability to represent with the clay and communicate their thinking through language.

Lynn Hill and Kelly Wells introduced the audience to "The Revolving Door Project" at the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School. The project began as a concern for Sarah, a child who was quiet, withdrawn and sad, having endured multiple losses in her brief three years of life. Lynn and Kelly vowed to find a way to bring a sense of emotional security and personal worth to her world. Sarah loved two things: her stuffed animal called Patch and building with blocks. Sarah and her friends worked together to fashion a house for Patch. This house, they decided, needed a revolving door to be complete. Using drawings, repeated visits to a nearby revolving door and lots of debate as provocation, the children successfully built a model of such a door. When the result was not satisfying to them, they worked together and with teachers, parents and community members to redesign and build a "real revolving door" that now serves as the entrance to their classroom. Using this knowledge, they negotiated a curriculum that lasted two years and that slowly began to heal this fragile child. This example of social constructivism in action helped us to recognize the importance of social and emotional security in the school setting, and that the quieter, less obvious children can be powerful protagonists of learning for an entire community. It also reflects the true meaning of a learning community.

Gretchen Disler and Carol Fox (teachers at Blacksburg Middle School) shared their exciting story of a group of middle school teachers, dedicated to collaboratively moving the philosophies of Reggio Emilia into practice. The Reggio-inspired model they envisioned seeks to enhance the middle school community as a cohesive entity by capitalizing on the variety of skills, capacities and experiences which exist among the students, teachers and parents. Additionally, they found their Reggio-inspired model is responsive to the developmental needs of young adolescents articulated by the National Middle School Association. Their story of this journey to change within the Blacksburg Middle School community takes on an innovative approach to middle school reform.

The conference offered opportunities for conversation and building networks. One of the highlights of the conference was the visit to the Virginia Tech Child Development Lab School, inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach. In this setting, the conferees were invited to reflect on the Reggio Emilia approach and its influence in this cultural context that serves children, families, community and the students enrolled in the Virginia Tech teacher education program.

As the conference came to an end, we celebrated the passing of our rich, collaborative learning community at a dinner with music, sharing stories and promises to keep in touch as we all recast the Reggio Emilia approach in our respective contexts. Every one took home memories of people and learnings captured in a photograph of the whole group.

Weaving the Reggio Emilia Approach into Your School: Reflections and Impressions of our Second Annual Conference

by Ellen Hall, Debbie Milot and Lori Loutzenhiser

Ellen Hall and Debbie Milot are the directors of Make a Mess and Make Believe Preschool in Boulder, Colo., which sponsored a conference related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy in June 1999. Lori Loutzenhiser is a mentor teacher in the Master's program at this same preschool. Debbie and Ellen attended the May 1997 study tour to Reggio Emilia.

About the Conference

The conference, "Weaving the Reggio Emilia Approach Into Your School," began in a 100-year-old barn in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains on a bright, clear June day. Leo Melli, a parent from Reggio Emilia, created a bridge to Italy as he spoke from the heart about his family and the experiences surrounding his children's education. Brad Mitchell (professor of education from Ohio State University) highlighted a century of education with poetry and prose.

With that, we were off to the bustling Pearl Street Mall where educators from across the country shared their investigations and insights with people from all over the world (The Netherlands, Argentina, Canada, Hawaii, etc.), united by a commitment to children and a respect for them as vital citizens.

We began the second day of the conference with George Forman and Brenda Fyfe, who had just returned from a research seminar in Reggio Emilia, Italy. George and Brenda led an all-conference dialogue about current issues in education. Break-out sessions followed where small groups of conference attendees, led by presenters, participated in discussions around relevant topics.

The conference balanced a great deal of information, sharing and learning with fun and cultural events that enabled participants to get to know each other. These events included a picnic dinner and "Shakespeare Under the Stars," dessert and coffee at the Dushanbe Teahouse, happy hour after the wrap-up session and, of course, the weaving.

The conference concluded with a wrap-up session at the vintage Boulder Theater. However, our collaborations with each other did not end there. It continued in an on-line course, led by George Forman, that had begun prior to the conference. This enabled presenters and participants to continue sharing ideas and learning together using the topics from the break-out sessions as a framework.

Reflections/Impressions

The concept of weaving embodies both our goals for the conference and the conference experience, in a word, relationships. The conference was structured to allow time for participants and presenters to get to know one another and share ideas. The small groups enabled us to find common ground, and the social activities created a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere in which to discuss viewpoints and ideas. As one conference participant wrote: "We have created a community of creative, competent and empowered learners."

As we discuss what we learned at the conference in our school, references to presenters and participants are as friends as well as colleagues. Families are also deeply affected by the support of a community, and actually need it to thrive. "Each environment must be aware of the partial and incomplete role it plays and must therefore seek to collaborate and be integrated with the others." (Spagglan, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, p. 110) School does not exist separate from home or vice versa. Families need schools and schools need families. It is this reciprocity that lays the foundation for cooperative relationships.

While parents and educators, as well as society as a whole, benefit from a collaborative home-school community, it is the children who reap the greatest rewards. Seeing parents as a vital part of the school community, and the school as a vital part of the larger community, children understand the importance of the role they play in our world. They not only realize their own self worth, but they learn about community and feel its power. When genuine love and respect are modeled by parents and teachers, this allows children to see the value of people working together for the greater good. They learn the invaluable spirit of cooperation.

All of the philosophical/theoretical insight gleaned at the conference has given way to some very concrete ideas for creating and fostering a learning community where parents, teachers and children think, evolve and grow together. We are in the process, at Make a Mess and Make Believe, of working with parents to implement and modify ideas to meet the specific needs of our community. We have a very active parent liaison group that meets regularly, and puts together information for all parents. We have had parent meetings in each classroom which have resulted in parents spending more time in the classrooms, parents working together to contribute to the classroom environment, families including what is going on at school as part of their daily dialogue with their children, and parents and teachers feeling more comfortable in making their needs known and working to accommodate each other.

As we work together to create the structure and opportunities, we also get to know and respect one another, thereby taking part in the community we are working to build. Learning of the struggles and successes of others, and collaborating to overcome common challenges at the summer conference, "Weaving the Reggio Emilia Approach Into Your School," was invaluable in giving us the tools and confidence to continue our work. ■

Reggio Conferences and Workshops

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education.

We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy; phone: 011-39-522-455416; fax: 011-39-522-455621.

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of *Innovations* to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators

Wayne State University • Detroit, Mich.
January 15, 2000 — Dave Kelly.

"Supporting Children's Expression Through the Use of Materials"

March 4, 2000 — Carolyn Edwards,
"Creating Caring and Teaching Relationships in the Infant-Toddler Center"

May 6, 2000 — Rebecca New,
"Children, Families and Civic Participation in Italian Early Childhood Education: Variations on the Theme of Quality"

Contact: Judith Allen Kaminsky
Merrill-Palmer Institute • Wayne State University
71 E. Ferry Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
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Experiences and Exchanges with the Reggio Approach
University School • Milwaukee, Wis.
January 29, 2000 — Keynote speaker is Brenda Fyfe. Other speakers include Dave Kelly and Kim Cushman of Chicago Commons.

Contact: Marge Egenhofer
13585 West Linfield Dr.
New Berlin, WI 53151
262/786-6814
egenm@power.com.net

The Innovative Teacher Project
Mills College • Oakland, Calif.
January 29, February 26, April 22, May 20 and June 10, 2000 — Saturday Roundtables
Professional Development Seminars
March 10-12, 2000 — "Documentation and Research"

Contact: Susan Lyon, Director
The Innovative Teacher Project • Mills College
5000 MacArthur Blvd
Oakland, CA 94613
510/430-3105 • Fax 510/430-3233
slyon@mills.edu

St. Louis — Reggio Collaborative Delegation Days

The College School, Clayton Schools' Family Center and The St. Michael School
February 23-25 & February 28-March 1, 2000
Contact: The St. Michael School
6345 Wydown Blvd.
Clayton, MO 63105
314/721-4422

Third Reggio Children Summer Institute in the United States
Boulder, Colo.
July 19-22, 2000

Contact: Ellen Hall and Debbie Milot
1919 Yarmouth Ave.
Boulder, CO 80304
303/443-8909 • Fax 303/443-8982
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Conference of Related Interest

Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach

Robert Allerton Conference Center • Monticello, Ill.
August 1-5, 2000 —
Session I: Learning the Project Approach
August 5-8, 2000 —
Session II: Sharing Experiences in Using the Project Approach
Contact: 217/333-2800 • Fax 217/333-9561
engaging@e1po.com/educ.edu

Study Tours

Angela Ferraro is working with the offices of Reggio Children to organize study tours of the Reggio Emilia Infant-Toddler Centers and Schools for children 3 to 6 years of age. The next study tour is May 26-June 4, 2000.
Contact: Angela Ferraro
13 Ellery St., Apt. 4
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reggio children

In the spring of 1994, the Reggio Children organization was formed in Reggio Emilia, Italy, to support the municipality's world-renowned early childhood program. The goal of Reggio Children is to disseminate the wealth of knowledge in theory and practice that has resulted from more than 30 years of experience in the education of children from 3 months to 6 years of age. Through publication and distribution of books, articles, videos and slides that document the Reggio approach, educators can learn more about these educational principles and benefit their own classrooms.

Reggio Children also responds to the increasingly numerous requests for information and cooperative exchanges that arrive from all over the world. Reggio Children is a private, for-profit company governed by a board of directors and supported by shareholders — corporate, private (parents, teachers and other citizens of Reggio Emilia), and the municipality of Reggio Emilia which holds the majority of shares. Until now this organization has not been open to individuals outside Italy.

friends of reggio children

In memory of Louis Malaguzzi, *Friends of Reggio Children*, a non profit, international organization, has been formed and membership is open to all. The goal of *Friends of Reggio Children* is to create an endowment that would establish a library for collecting documents about the Reggio approach and to provide funds for student research on the Reggio philosophy and principles.

Friends of Reggio Children is asking for your support. A one-time donation will enable you to become a member of an international group who believes in the educational principles that the Reggio program exemplifies and in the right of children to obtain the best care and education possible. The association's membership fee is \$35 U.S. and can be paid by banker's draft or by bank transfer (bank account # 2615661 at Cassa di Risparmio di Reggio Emilia, Piazza Battisti 1, 42100 Reggio Emilia). Members of *Friends of Reggio Children* will receive a subscription to *rechild*, the newsletter published by Reggio Children.

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A baby. I could do
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spaghetti-o's.

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in early education: the international reggio exchange ²⁶

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winter/spring 2000

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The Nature of Professional Development in the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools: An Interview with Paola Cavazzoni - Part 1 -

by Amelia Gambetti, Libby Sheldon-Harsch and Hanna Kitchens
translated by Gabriella Grasselli

Paola Cavazzoni is a pedagogista (education coordinator), part of the pedagogical team of the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools. The following interview represents Paola's interpretation of the role of the pedagogistas and educators in Reggio. While sharing Paola's point of view, it is essential to emphasize the value of different perspectives regarding the experience of the children, educators and families in Reggio Emilia. Part 2 of this interview will be in the next issue of Innovations, Volume 7, Number 4.

Amelia Gambetti is the coordinator of Reggio Children and liaison for consultancy in schools. Libby Sheldon-Harsch and Hanna Kitchens are professional development consultants at the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University and work with Detroit Head Start teachers in a Reggio-inspired professional development project, currently in its sixth year. The interview questions that follow were devised by Libby and Hanna, while Amelia edited both the questions and Paola's responses. The editors of Innovations would like to express their appreciation to all of the contributors to this interview.

Q How can you explain the process of teacher education within the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools? How does this experience support teacher education?

Paola: I think it is important to underline the relationship between the terms, education and process. In the question, education, in fact, is not and cannot simply be an act of knowledge transmission but rather a complex construction process since knowledge is constructed, not received. Therefore, the act of educating must be projected and strategic, not programmed in advance. It must be capable of developing and modifying itself within evolving contexts. The act of educating must be flexible and open to dialogue between children and adults, and attentive to the compe-

tencies and the questions of adults and children. This interpretation of the idea of education requires and calls for commitment, responsibility, attention and solidarity on the part of all the individuals who work in schools. This means having infant-toddler centers and preschools based on alliances and exchanges between children, teachers, auxiliary staff and families, not based on delegated powers. Therefore, we view the preschool and the infant-toddler center as a system of relationships and interactions where each subject is both author and co-author, together with others, of the identity and the quality of the education service.

Going back to the question of how teacher education and development occurs, I think it is important to state that this is constructed by each individual, through a continuous process of definition and self-definition, through exchange and dialogue with others and continuous reflection. In this process, the exchange with colleagues and between teachers, auxiliary staff and parents does not amount simply to the sum of individual thoughts, but becomes an interpretive and projected process . . . a way of thinking and doing education.

In order to get beyond the level of declaration, however, we have to consider how the experience is organized. The way in which the experience is organized represents the highest meeting point between thinking and practice, thought and action, and vice-versa. Therefore, organization is a means for providing shape, for activating and promoting a tangible dialogue and exchange. The Reggio Emilia infant-toddler and preschool experience welcomes and makes projections for spaces, rhythms and ideas for the daily developments of these values. Even the working hours of the teaching and auxiliary personnel are organized to include weekly sessions on professional development and education, meetings that take place between the adults from the school . . . teachers in small, medium and large groups and families. These are times of ongoing professional development

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during which we share ideas and project hypotheses, questions, doubts and successes but we also share our difficulties of living within this educational setting and process. They are times of self-education during which the exchange between teachers is not solely characterized by one teacher giving the others information about something that happened, but by a common search for a dialogue about what a particular experience may mean to the adults and the children.

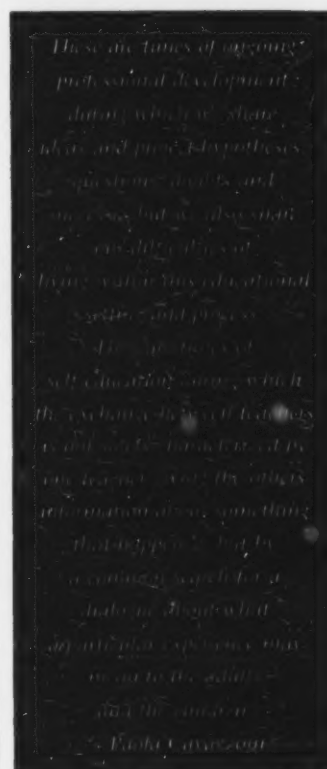
Q When beginning to work with a new group of inexperienced teachers, how does your process of support begin, both concretely and philosophically?

Paola: The teachers' role and professionalism are hardly considered in the course of their first training in high school, which is often based on abstractions. These concepts are defined and elaborated wholly during the teachers' in-service experience, which involves a process of re-education. Accordingly, the teachers are called upon to structure their educational experience through listening and exchange during interactions with children and colleagues. It is important to consider that a lack of experience does not necessarily mean the absence of expectations or ideas regarding the image of the child or the role of teachers in the schools for young children. Therefore, it is useful and urgent to hold professional education sessions in conjunction with the new teachers' entry into the school. These sessions are dedicated to listening to their questions and ideas as well as exploring the teaching group's understandings and reflections about the underlying values of the educational experience of children from 0 to 6 years of age.

It is also extremely important to identify working strategies geared to supporting the interpretation of these values and meanings, so that they can become an attainable goal in a particular educational context, in close connection with the socio-cultural situation which characterizes it. These strategies and meanings require the active participants of the educational process to have the capacity to listen to the educational context with extreme attention, curiosity and flexibility.

The types of teacher education that we use are made up of different parts: the preliminary part before the teachers come into the school, and one that can be described as permanent teacher education, which analyzes and is structured around the contents and experiences, always with an awareness that the two exist in a relationship of close and inseparable reciprocity. The preliminary part represents an opportunity for sharing and reflecting upon the values and meanings that inspire the educational project, and the part relating to permanent education involves the identification and choice of the organizational possibilities for teacher education as well as the relevant contents and themes. The themes related to understanding and discussing the experience can apply equally to the organization of the day in infant-toddler centers and preschools, relations among the children or between adults and children, and the role and organization of the

space and the school environment, including the educational projects as well as communication and relations with the families in everyday circumstances and during specially organized opportunities. This permanent teacher education experience is based on exchange, comparison, assessment and self-assessment. It involves listening to the experience of other teachers, exchange of views and experience with other services operating in the city and locally on educational questions. These provide a precious opportunity to discuss cultural contents and educational themes, as well as improve our understanding of our own history by comparing it with the history of others.



Q We often contemplate the "role of the teacher." How do you define the role of the teacher? the pedagogista? the atelierista [studio teacher]?

Paola: Considering what has been said about the idea of educational experiences, a definition of the professional identity of these educators cannot be given in abstract terms but rather in a contextual framework, within the interconnecting network of relationships which exist between colleagues, parents and especially children – not just hypothetical children but the real children we live with every day. I think it is important to emphasize that beyond their traditional role, teachers live in an environment which can potentially make them into great protagonists, not so much as teachers whose job is to implement a precise and predefined educational program, but as authors and protagonists, together with the other members of the school, of the identity and quality of the edu-

cation project. They are teachers who are responsible for making visible their ideas and those of the children, so that these ideas can be enriched by the contributions of others through exchanges with them. Teachers are responsible for the educational projects of the infant-toddler centers and preschools, for devising and sustaining the fabric of relationships, and contributing to their transformation into meaningful interactions and communications. Therefore, the teachers' professionalism is built on the daily observation and interpretation of the context, working with an awareness that the learning process involves the children and the adults with them.

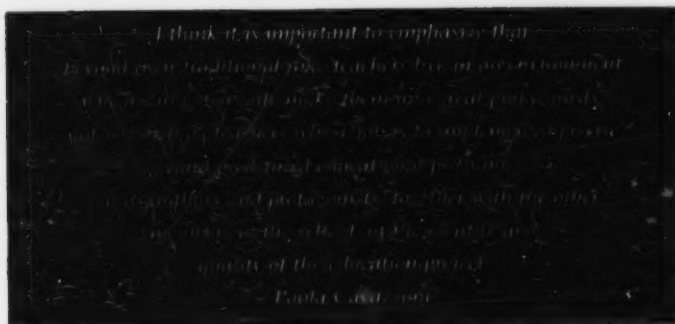
These basic premises also apply to the *atelierista*. This is a figure that was identified in the '70s by Professor Loris Malaguzzi [founder of the Reggio Emilia municipal early childhood experience] to promote an active kind of school that could overcome the pre-eminence of words, especially the teacher's words, in favor of a school of the One Hundred Languages, all of which contribute to the construction of a warm, whole and alive kind of knowledge together. The *atelier* [studio] and the *atelierista* are not a place or a position separate from the life of the school. On the contrary, the *atelierista*, together with her or his teaching colleagues, participates in the educational choices of the school. Thus, the *atelier* is the acknowledged place for promoting broad encounters and explorations with materials and tools that elicit and stimulate the different expressive and symbolic languages. At the same time, it is a place to elaborate projects which originated in the classrooms and find a natural echo chamber for developments unfolding over a more continuous time frame. The *atelier* can be seen as a laboratory within the greater laboratory which the school as a whole represents.

Recognizing the close relationship and the project-related connection that exists between the *atelier* and the classroom, and between the *atelieristas* and their colleagues also means recognizing the importance of difference and the encounter between different forms of knowledge. Therefore, it is important to be cognizant of the different experiences and understandings of the *atelieristas*, their alternative perspectives and other possible interpretive approaches as resources for enriching, updating and sensitizing the adults' knowledge about the children's creative processes. Children express their thoughts, communicate, construct and invent through verbal as well as non-verbal languages. They do so in a world where creativity should not be conceived as a distinct mental faculty but as a characterization of children's and human beings way of thinking, understanding and deciding.

The role of the *pedagogista* in Reggio Emilia originated in pedagogical and educational theory, reconfirming the interdisciplinary and cultural value of education. In the educational experience of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, the *pedagogista* does not fulfill an independent function but operates in a close relationship with the other members, both inside the schools with teachers, families, colleagues and *atelieristas*, and

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outside, in a broader context of exchanges relating to the educational environment as well as the political and cultural aspects of society. The function of the *pedagogista* is relational, promoting a culture of childhood that can uphold the rights of children and families to an environment, to the infant-toddler center and preschool, conceived as a place of education. Within this broad definition, the members of the team of *pedagogistas* have a number of competencies and functions related to:

- elaborating the pedagogical orientations for the services for 0-6 year old children in our city;
- thinking, analyzing, elaborating projects for infant-toddler center and preschool professional education (teachers, *atelleristas*, auxiliary staff, etc.), professional development initiatives intended to support research, institution-based educational initiatives and setting out the contents of professional education and weekly staff-meetings for teachers;
- making choices in relation to projects about family participation, regarding the procedures as well as the contents of meetings between families and institutions.

These and other functions are enriched by the relationship that the *pedagogistas* have with

the life of infant-toddler centers and preschools, and with those who experience being with children every day. In my opinion, the *pedagogista* forms an active part of the life of these centers by participating in internal professional education sessions, in the decision-making process regarding the organization and management of the service, and in the occasions when exchange and dialogue with families takes place. The role of the *pedagogista* is defined in the field, in accordance with theoretical presuppositions, finding its own original interpretations and different focuses inside each educational situation.

Q • Can you discuss the teacher's role as "listener?" How do the teachers use what they have "heard," on behalf of the children and their own professional understandings?

Paola: Listening to children means recognizing, in everyday actions and in a coherent manner, the child and the human being as the carrier and builder of his or her own culture and theories. It means attributing value and values to the individual. Listening refers not only to words but also to expressions, glances, actions and questions, to children's different ways and rhythms of experiencing and approaching projects and life within the school. Listening is emotional, in the sense that it consciously chooses to be on the children's side, taking care to value the children's

richness, power and capacity to construct and negotiate meanings. Emotion comes from shared understandings between children and adults.

Accordingly, the role of the adult is not only characterized by listening to the child, but also by listening to oneself. Listening, in fact, cannot be a one-way process (directed toward the child) but always and absolutely includes the adult, his or her expectations and subjectivities, and the context and environment which adults and children create and experience. Listening is active and not meditative. It is an engaging activity, where the adult is required to have an attitude to observe. In this sense, observation becomes a way for the teacher to stay close to the children, a way of seeing the child and recognizing the signs that may enable the child's thinking processes to be interpreted. It is an observation process that requires a frame of mind that is open and attentive to what children are and to what they say. That requires exchange and listening to be reciprocal.

Therefore, it is important that the adult's listening activity makes itself visible to the eyes of the other adults as well as the children of the school, through written comments and images, in order to improve skills and understanding. Giving visibility to the children's growth and knowledge building processes is a way of leaving traces which can be remembered and interpreted, so the learning processes of the adults and children of the school continue to evolve. It also increases the possibility and opportunity of re-reading one's own understanding, and that of other adults and children. All of these factors are vitally important in our search for meaning in our work in the centers.

Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Teacher Education: The Development of a Pedagogy of Collaborative Inquiry

by Mary Jane Moran

Mary Jane Moran is an assistant professor in the Department of Family Studies and associate director of the Child Study & Development Center at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, New Hampshire. A teacher educator for 18 years, Mary Jane participated in study tours to Reggio Emilia in 1992 and 1995. The following is an excerpt from her presentation at a seminar in October 1999, which was part of the early childhood education series, "Innovations in Early Education," sponsored by the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

My approach to teacher education is focused on the development of inquiry among early childhood preservice teachers and the children they teach. This work is largely influenced by my visits to the preprimary schools of Reggio Emilia in the early and mid-1990s, and the call to reform teacher education away from a transmission orientation toward one of inquiry. Responses to this call have been characterized by the incorporation of reflective practice, the promotion of teacher as classroom researcher, and the revision of the original DAP [developmentally-appropriate practice] guidelines to include considerations for the development of teachers as decision-makers. Moreover, key tenets of social constructivist theory that once influenced the way we taught children have now begun to inform the way we educate teachers. Since these programmatic and theoretical aspects of current reform in teacher education are encapsulated within the Reggio Emilia approach, this approach can serve as a framework for the education and research of adults' learning as well as that of young children.

I now investigate the nature of the development of inquiry among preservice teachers. In particular, the transactional relationship between preservice teachers and the children they teach. I believe that this relationship is important to study because the development of teacher inquiry evolves from the relationships between teachers' practice and children's learning in the classroom. I also believe that the development of inquiry is not stage-like but complex, dynamic and multifaceted. Therefore, the study of the development of inquiry requires more than the use of separate, static measures such as reflective writing. My inquiry also depends upon multiple records (e.g., video tapes, photographs, audio tape transcriptions, field notes and reflective writings) that are naturally produced when preservice teachers implement projects with preschool-aged children.

Collaborative Projects

Project work is not new. In the 1930s, John Dewey called project work "reconstructions." During the past decade, Sylvia Chard and Lillian Katz have contributed enormously to our understanding of project work with children. At the same time, we have been introduced to and provoked by the many ways Reggio Emilia teachers incorporate project work into their complex early care and educational system. In my work at UNH, we refer to projects as collaborative projects

because both teachers and children learn from these experiences together.

Social Constructivist Theory

Social constructivism is the theoretical framework that guides my decisions for creating an environment within which preservice teachers develop inquiry. According to the key tenets of social constructivist theory, we construct knowledge with others, often focused on a joint shared activity. It is, therefore, my responsibility as the teacher educator to create such occasions for learning in which preservice teachers learn to teach in relation to others.

The joint activity for our work is project work. When preservice teachers implement projects together, they are required to collectively plan and teach, take the lead from their children, listen carefully, observe closely, and document continually in order to respond to children's changing needs, abilities and interests. As a result, preservice teachers first construct their knowledge about teaching and child development on the social plane (intermentally). Because the preservice teachers at UNH are not taught to teach from prepackaged curricula, they become dependent on their teaching partners' perspectives, documentation and the shared understanding that develops as they collectively create plans and implement new activities. Once knowledge is constructed with others on the social plane, it can be internalized on the psychological plane (intramentally). When we internalize or appropriate knowledge, we are able to act on it, use it and build upon it.

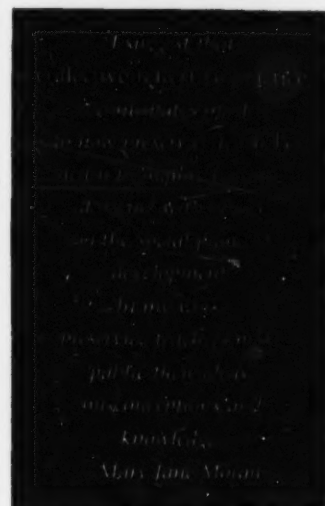
Barbara Rogoff believes we appropriate knowledge when we are active participants in social activities instead of simply collecting, storing and compartmentalizing skills and knowledge. As a result of such active participation with others, we are more likely to engage in and master similar, subsequent activities. Basically, she's suggesting that we are more capable of generalizing our skills and knowledge if we have constructed knowledge through participation in activities with others.

Collaboration

Intersubjectivity or shared understanding is fundamental to the development of collaboration. I tell my students that collaboration is not just simply the act of sitting around a table completing the same task. Instead, col-

laboration requires negotiation, compromise, listening, considering multiple perspectives and making joint decisions. People who participate in social groups do not necessarily collaborate with one another. This is certainly true for teaching teams, whether they are comprised of preservice teachers or experienced teachers. Teacher educators can teach teachers how to collaborate and optimize their abilities to socially construct knowledge by first orchestrating collaboration.

For example, preservice teachers enrolled in my course are put into teaching teams during the first two weeks of the semester. These project teams work with a group of six children. It is in these groups that a topic of inquiry is pursued, guided by preservice teachers who teach in the classroom on separate days of the



week. Since preservice teachers are not required to co-teach, each one must brief her team following her teaching day using the videotape and audio tape from her teaching day, photographs, field notes and children's work samples.

As preservice teachers make decisions about their practice together, they begin to construct shared understandings. For example, often they are most challenged by the joint task of choosing a project topic. They frequently disagree about what children are interested in or what would be worth everyone's time and effort to pursue. They struggle with how to introduce a topic and then how to extend children's previous experiences. They often differ on when to introduce new materials that may encourage children to represent what they know or whether a child who is not participating in an activity is bored, overwhelmed or simply observing. With time and experience and faced with real problems to solve that affect their own practice and the progress of their project, preser-

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vice teachers become increasingly capable of constructing collective responses to these diverse challenges. It is at these points along the way that genuine collaboration begins to develop.

Reflective Practice

Some people use inquiry and reflective practice interchangeably, yet I see them very differently. Teachers who teach from an inquiry-oriented stance share reflective writings, field notes and other records with others rather than keeping them private. I suggest that *collective reflective practice* contributes most to how preservice teachers learn to inquire because it occurs with others on the social plane of development. In my work, preservice teachers make public their ideas, misconceptions and knowledge. Through participating in verbal exchanges and sharing documentation, they invite and expect others to contribute to and influence their thinking and practice. For example, preservice teachers write in journals about their individual ideas, challenges and questions, and their team struggles. In many teacher education programs, this is a solitary task which may be

Collaborative Action Research

During my second visit to the preprimary schools of Reggio Emilia in 1995, I focused most of my attention on the teachers. I wanted to better understand how they taught and learned together. I began to review the literature for ways in which teachers conduct research in their classrooms and became interested in collaborative action research. This approach is the methodology I use for my work in studying preservice teachers and the approach they use to study their work with young children. I believe it reflects some of the ways Reggio Emilia teachers engage in research about their own practice. The goal of collaborative action research is to construct responses with others to problems and challenges that arise in the classroom with an expectation that teachers' knowledge and skills will continue to develop as a result of the action research process.

I teach preservice teachers how to generate records and use tools in order to create a body of knowledge about the nature of their children's learning and their role in it. Often, preservice teachers are more successful at

ing when she wants or needs to document a moment. As soon as she recognizes that the tools she gives her children support their ability to remain focused or develop logical memory, for example, she then begins to understand the usefulness of tools for her own practice.

Documentation

Documentation has contributed to my ability to educate preservice teachers toward an inquiry-oriented teaching stance. For me, documentation serves three functions. Documentation represents what children and teachers do, say and think through transcriptions, photographs, text, drawings and constructions, among others. Documentation is also mediational because the process of analyzing records has the potential for influencing teacher practice and how teachers come to understand children's learning. It's also mediational when teachers document right as they're taking a photograph. When teachers document, they must make decisions on where to place their sights. This act then has the potential to sharpen their focus and guide their practice. They are faced with questions such as: Why did I chose to document this

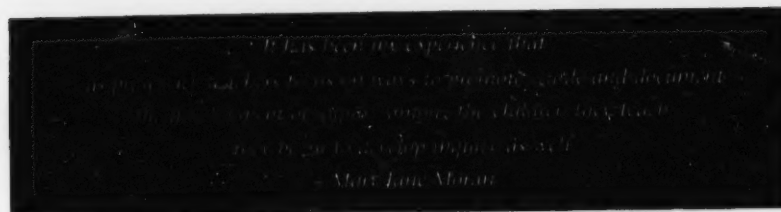
particular event? The answer to this question is often revealing, illuminating what teachers value and believe is important to document in their classrooms. Finally, documentation is epistemological because the process expands our knowledge about children and teaching. Through analyzing a variety of records over time, we come to know more about how children learn and our part in their learning. This deeper understanding is maximized when shared with others.

Conclusion

It has been my experience that as preservice teachers focus on ways to promote, guide and document the development of inquiry among the children they teach, they begin to develop inquiry as well. As they develop inquiry, they become increasingly engaged and passionate about their learning and the learning of their children. They develop an ability to make decisions, self-regulate practice and reflect in action. As preservice teachers become increasingly aware of the significance of their actions on children's learning, they develop an increased curiosity to know more about children's learning and the role they play in that process. In a sense, children's processes of learning are reflecting pools for my students' development of collaborative inquiry . . . Inquiry that develops in relationship with other preservice teachers and the children they teach. This reconceptualized orientation to teaching is filled with concentric circles. These circles include teaching, reflecting, reconsidering and returning to the classroom with others to implement new activities guided by documentation and the perspectives of the collectives within which teachers teach and learn.



UNH Documentation Workshop where preservice teachers work side-by-side with lab school teachers to make the learning processes of the children visible in the form of documentation panels. The tools available to the teachers include a light table, a digital camera and video camera along with regular VHS cameras and 35 mm cameras, computers with PageMaker and Adobe Photo Shop software, scanners, zip drives, audio tape machines and transcription machines, a video printer, TV monitors and VCRs.



shared with the instructor. While I respond to their writings, they are also expected to share them with others in order to invite others' perspectives. As such, collective reflection is the active participation in conversations with others and the use of documentation (e.g., journal writings, photographs, transcriptions, etc.) to inform those conversations and subsequent classroom practice.

providing children tools for their inquiry (e.g., microscopes, magnifying glasses, clipboards and fine tip markers) before they are able to use tools for their own inquiry. At first, a preservice teacher may remember to bring an audio tape player into the classroom but forget to turn it on or she may have a camera at hand but, at times, forget to take a photograph. Yet, the presence of the camera and audio tape player reminds her to use these tools and to be conscious about decid-

Carol Bersani is a professor of education and director of the Child Development Center at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Carol participated in study tours to Reggio Emilia in 1995 and 1998, and is a member of the Lugano-Reggio Collaborative for teacher educators. The following are Carol's comments during a pre-conference session organized by Reggio Children at the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference in November 1999.

Creating Learning Communities to Support Teacher Education

by Carol Bersani

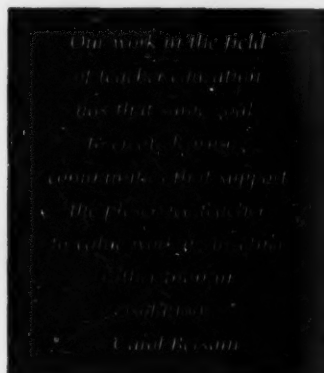
At a recent meeting of our northeast Ohio Reggio study group, five experienced teachers who had just returned from their first study tour to Reggio were asked to share what they had learned. Because their thinking has important implications for our work in preservice teacher education, I would like to share highlights of their remarks.

While acknowledging the beautiful environments and the absorbing panels, they focused almost exclusively on the relationships within each school, and between the schools and the community. They observed and felt ways of being together that were based on respect, support, encouragement and passion. One said, "Teachers, children and parents were living each day together." They saw a community that supported its children and their schools. When asked how this visit will impact their work in this country, all spoke of wanting to intensify efforts to create caring learning communities for themselves and their children and families, where each person supports and challenges the other.

Our work in the field of teacher education has that same goal: to create learning communities that support the preservice teacher to value working together rather than in isolation. We want them to engage in inquiry based on the questions that children and teachers pose, instead of viewing knowledge as something to be acquired from experts. We also want them to understand the importance of really knowing the children and their families as a basis for teaching.

As we have worked to apply social constructivist theory and the Reggio principles to teacher education, we have experienced competing forces which we are trying to reconcile:

- Preservice students are expected to have a broad range of experiences in diverse settings (e.g., urban, early intervention). Yet at the same time, we have come to understand the meaning of knowing the children more deeply as a basis for supporting their learning. Students must have sustained experiences with a group of children in order to experience the power of relationships for teaching and learning.
- Preservice students bring to their study an image of teaching as individual, independent work that the university



often reinforces. We want them to see learning as a collaborative, interdependent endeavor involving all the protagonists: college instructors, preservice students, classroom teachers, and the children and their families.

- Learning to teach requires immersion in the work. A substantial time commitment is required. Many of our traditional students must also work outside of school in order to pay for school. Nontraditional students often need evening classes as they have day-time work or family responsibilities.

To recast our teacher education program from this perspective, we have made many changes in the structure of our program. Through focus groups, our students participated in this change process. The junior year is devoted to the study of teaching and learning in preschool; the senior year focuses on kindergarten-primary education. I would like to highlight some of those changes.

- We created more in-depth and sustained teaching experiences for our students. Across the four-year program, our students now have more than 1,000 hours of teaching experience. Instead of separate field experiences for each course, students now have one field experience each semester with all formal coursework coordinated with the field. A linking seminar supports students in their efforts to observe, document, interpret and plan integrated curriculum experiences for the children. A listserv allows students to continually engage in dialogue about

their work. We have been inspired by our study of the Reggio approach to place major emphasis on what it means to listen to children.

- At the preschool level, students are assigned to classrooms in teams of two. Within the formal coursework, inquiry groups of three or four are established. Students conduct research projects related to their questions about teaching.
- Within each field teaching assignment, time for dialogue with one's partner and with the classroom teacher is provided.
- Faculty who teach the formal coursework surrounding the field also work as a team to provide continuity for the students and support for each other's teaching. Our goal is to model for students this way of working together. Many of our courses are now team-taught as well.
- Many ways for involving parents in the education of teachers are included in the program. For example, parents are invited to study and critique documentation prepared by the students at one of the last class sessions of the semester. In one course, a parent serves as a co-instructor. This is funded through a grant that focuses on parents in higher education.

Evaluation continues to be a formidable challenge for us, given that our university requires the standard letter grade system. It seems inappropriate for this way of working together.

While the work both challenges us to examine our own beliefs about teaching and learning and requires that we invest considerable time and effort to building a learning community for our students, it has also renewed our passion for teaching.

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Reggio Conferences and Workshops

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education.

We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, phone: 011-39-522-455416, fax: 011-39-522-455621.

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of Innovations to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.

The Innovative Teacher Project
Mills College • Oakland, Calif.
Saturday Roundtables: May 20 & June 10, 2000
Contact:
Susan Lyon, Director
The Innovative Teacher Project
Mills College
(510) 430-3105
Fax (510) 430-1233
slyon@mills.edu

The Program for Collaborative Learning
Cvett Center for Early Education, Carnegie Mellon University • Pittsburgh, Pa.

Seminars:
May 20, 2000: Louise Cadwell, "Exploring Materials: Making Meaning"
Visitation Day:
May 19, 2000:
"A Day at the Cvett Center" with Sonya Shoptaugh & Louise Cadwell
Jill Watson Festival:
Sept. 14, 2000
Michele Zini, "Children, Spaces, Relations: Metaproject for an Environment for Young Children"
Contact:
Hilde Droulla
Cvett Center for Early Education
Program for Collaborative Learning
(412) 264-1512
hdroulla@andrew.cmu.edu

Reggio Emilia Explorations: Study Tour, Presentation and Discussion on Research Studies
Chicago Commons Child Development Program • Chicago, Ill. • May 4 & 5, 2000
Contact:
Juana Reyes
Chicago Commons Child Development Program
(773) 442-5130
reyes@chicagocommons.org

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators
Wayne State University • Detroit, Mi.
May 6, 2000: Rebecca New, "Children, Families and Civic Participation in Italian Early Childhood Education: Variations on the Theme of Quality"
Contact:
Judith Allen Kaminsky
Merrill-Palmer Institute
Wayne State University
(313) 872-1790
fax (313) 875-0947
j.a.kaminsky@wayne.edu

Inspirations from Reggio Emilia
"Knowing Children: Processes of Observing, Interpreting and Documenting" • Lesley College • Cambridge, Ma. • May 5&6, 2000
Presenters: Sonya Shoptaugh & Barbara Acton
Contact:
Lesley College
(617) 349-8922
Fax (617) 349-8125
mmindes@lesley.edu

New Generation in the New Century:
Reggio Conference on Creative Learning
University of Akureyri • Akureyri, Iceland • June 11-14, 2000 • Speakers include: Carlina Rinaldi, Amelia Gambetti, Kristjan Kristjansson, Anna Barsotti & Harold Gotthson
Contact:
Ninni Travel
ninni@ninnitravel.is

Reggio Children Summer Institute: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Education
Boulder, Co. • July 19-22, 2000 • Speakers from Italy include: Carla Rinaldi, Amelia Gambetti, Mara Davoli, Paola Avari, Lucia Colla, Paola Riccio and Lella Gandini. Presenters from the U.S. include: Barbara Acton, Lori Gelismar-Ryan, Karen Haigh, Judith Allen Kaminsky, Susan Lyon & Mary Hartzell Rota.
Contact:
Ellen Hall & Deborah Millot
Make a Mess and Make Believe
(303) 443-8909
Fax (303) 443-8902
ehall@20email.com

Conferences of Related Interest

Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach
Robert Allerton Conference Center • Monticello, Ill.
Session I: Learning the Project Approach: August 2-6, 2000
Session II: Sharing Experiences in Using the Project Approach: August 5-8, 2000
Contact:
(217) 333-2880
Fax (217) 333-9561
engaging@cipco.conteduluc.edu

Study Tours

Angela Ferrario works with the offices of Reggio Children to organize study tours of the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools. For information, contact:
Angela Ferrario
13 Ellery St., Apt. 4
Cambridge, MA 02138
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Fax (617) 864-1095

GRAM



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Fax 39-06-5810788 (at Academy)
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*Temporary address for three years, beginning on
August 20, 1998**

Pamela Houk
Liaison in the U.S. for the exhibit "The
Hundred Languages of Children"
Dayton Art Institute
456 Belmonte Park North
Dayton, OH 45405
(937) 223-5277
Fax (937) 293-4540

The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit Schedule



March 25, 1999 - October 2000

Mills College, Oakland, Calif.
Contact: Susan Lyon • Innovative Teacher
Project • Mills College • 5000 MacArthur
Blvd. • Oakland, CA 94613 • (510) 430-3105
or 430-2019 voice • Fax (510) 430-3233 •
e-mail: slyon@mills.edu

What's in the future for "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit?

In its 11 years on the road in North America,
the exhibition has visited 34 cities in 22 states
and D.C. in the United States and in Canada.
From March 1999 to October 2000, it will be
housed at Mills College, where initiatives for
professional development for educators will
be organized by Reggio Children and the
Innovative Teacher Project.

From November 2000 until the end of
December 2000, the exhibit will be in Atlanta,
Georgia, in connection with the NAEYC
annual conference. For further information,
contact Margie Cooper, project coordinator of
the NAEYC 2000 Project, 2040 Wilson Ridge
Ct., Roswell, GA 30075, (770) 552-0757, fax
(770) 552-0179, e-mail: margie.cooper@mind-
spring.com

A Map of Interest in the Reggio Emilia Approach in the United States and Canada

During the Reggio Children Summer Institute in July 1998, Lella
Gandini, liaison in the U.S. for Dissemination of the Reggio Emilia
Approach, initiated a survey regarding interest in the Reggio Emilia
educational philosophy. Lella asked Institute participants four ques-
tions about their knowledge of the Reggio approach and interest in
their community. Following the Institute, the survey was posted on
the Reggio listserve. Responses were compiled by Judith Kaminsky,
editor of *Innovations*.

We would like to invite the readers of *Innovations* to respond to
these questions in order for educators in Reggio and North America
to have a better understanding of interest in the Reggio educa-
tional philosophy in the United States and Canada. Once responses
from *Innovations* readers and NAEYC annual conference partici-
pants are compiled, an issue of *Innovations* will focus on these
results and other information about interest in this educational
approach including study tours and network groups.

Responses to the following questions can be sent to Judith Allen
Kaminsky, Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University, 71 E.
Ferry Ave., Detroit, MI 48202, fax (313) 875-0947, e-mail:
J_A_kaminsky@wayne.edu

1. Are there schools in your area (in your state) that are studying
and trying to adapt the Reggio Emilia approach?
2. Are there teachers that get together to discuss and reflect on the
theory and practice introduced by educators from Reggio Emilia?
3. Are there conferences, lectures, courses taught in colleges,
community colleges or universities?
4. Are you familiar with any publications, articles, etc. about the
Reggio Emilia educational philosophy?

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reggio children

In the spring of 1994, the Reggio Children organization was formed in Reggio Emilia, Italy, to support the municipality's world-renowned early childhood program. The goal of Reggio Children is to disseminate the wealth of knowledge in theory and practice that has resulted from more than 30 years of experience in the education of children from 3 months to 6 years of age. Through publication and distribution of books, articles, videos and slides that document the Reggio approach, educators can learn more about these educational principles and benefit their own classrooms.

Reggio Children also responds to the increasingly numerous requests for information and cooperative exchanges that arrive from all over the world. Reggio Children is a private, for-profit company governed by a board of directors and supported by shareholders - corporate, private (parents, teachers and other citizens of Reggio Emilia), and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia which holds the majority of shares. Until now this organization has not been open to individuals outside Italy.

friends of reggio children

In memory of Loris Malaguzzi, Friends of Reggio Children, a non-profit, international organization, has been formed and membership is open to all. The goal of Friends of Reggio Children is to create an endowment that would establish a library for collecting documents about the Reggio approach and to provide funds for student research on the Reggio philosophy and principles.

Friends of Reggio Children is asking for your support. A one-time donation will entitle you to become a member of an international group who believes in the educational principles that the Reggio program exemplifies and in the right of children to obtain the best care and education possible. The association's membership fee is \$35 U.S. and can be paid by banker's draft or by bank transfer (bank account # 26056/C at Cassa di Risparmio di Reggio Emilia, Piazza Rattazzi 1, 42100 Reggio Emilia. Members of Friends of Reggio Children will receive a subscription to *rechild*, the newsletter published by Reggio Children.



subscribe!

Name _____
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Subscriptions to *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange* are \$25 (\$30 U.S. funds for foreign) per year for four issues. Fill out the printed form and mail with a check payable to the Merrill-Palmer Institute to:

Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange
The Merrill-Palmer Institute
Wayne State University
71 East Ferry Ave.
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reggio networks

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Web Sites

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- ERIC/ECE Web site
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- *100 Languages of Children* (1995): A 30-minute videotape filmed at The Hundred Languages of Children exhibit in 1993-1994 at Dominican College, San Rafael, Calif., in order to create a memory of the exhibit for reflection and enjoyment. Produced by Susan Lyons, coordinator of the exhibit at Dominican College. \$30 includes shipping. Available from M.S. Lyons, 101 Lombard St., 608W, San Francisco, CA 94111. Fax (415) 297-8211.
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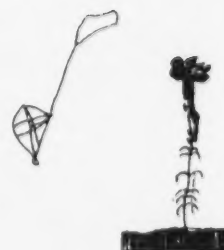
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The Nature of Professional Development in the
Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools:

AN INTERVIEW with PAOLA CAVAZZONI

BY AMELIA GAMBETTI,
LIBBY SHELDON-HARSH
AND HANNA KITCHENS
TRANSLATED BY
GABRIELLA GRASSELLI

Paola Cavazzoni is a pedagoga (education coordinator), part of the pedagogical team of the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools. The following interview represents Paola's interpretation of the role of the pedagogistas and educators in Reggio. While sharing Paola's point of view, it is essential to emphasize the value of different perspectives regarding the experience of the children, educators and families in Reggio Emilia. Part 1 of this interview appeared in the last issue of Innovations, Volume 7, Number 3.

Amelia Gambetti is the coordinator of Reggio Children and liaison for consultancy in schools. Libby Sheldon-Harsch and Hanna Kitchens are professional development consultants at the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University and work with Detroit Head Start teachers in a Reggio-inspired professional development project, currently beginning its seventh year. The interview questions that follow were devised by Libby and Hanna, while Amelia edited both the questions and Paola's responses. The editors of Innovations would like to express their appreciation to all of the contributors to this interview.

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How does documentation support the teacher's learning? What is the role of the pedagoga, the educator in that part of the process?

Paola: Documentation can support the teachers' learning if it is viewed as a process that supports educational action in a dialogue with the children's learning processes. Documentation should not be understood as merely a final report or a collection of documents for the school archives. The documents that we produce are partial records, subjective interpretations and points of view that must be reinterpreted together with colleagues who share our daily experience, so that they can be enriched by multiple perspectives and become stories with common meanings.

Documentation and documents in their different forms (writing, slides, videos, etc.) become important tools during times of self-education among teachers, in that they allow the adults, both the authors of the experience and others, to reconstruct what happened, identifying relationships as they do so. In this way, new relationships are built by the teachers working together to create possible meanings and directions for action and research. This provides an opportunity for reflection on one's own understanding and is a way in which to highlight the motivations of our being a school and practicing education. Documentation, therefore, stands as a procedural approach which, by enabling exchange to happen, allows hypotheses and forecasts to be made, thus consolidating our project-based approach and becoming the pivot of the *progettazione* process.

Accordingly, the role of the *pedagoga* is not just centered on a final stage in which, for example, the documentation produced comes together to be summarized but spans across the whole process, through listening and contributing to the construction of the project and documentation

hypotheses as they unfold. Rather than acting as an expert, the role of the *pedagoga* is that of an active discussant, in a position to sustain the teachers' critical interpretations, to suggest possible questions and queries which might bring out the teachers' narrative and interpretive abilities in relation to their ongoing projects. This means engaging in a dialogue with the teachers about the relationship between the thesis of a project and the way it is articulated by the images (chosen and produced by the teachers), choosing together the most effective media for reflecting and demonstrating the complexity and value of the research being carried out by the children and adults. The role of the *pedagoga* also includes re-launching exchanges and discussions relating to the teacher education process in order to sustain the richness of the school's daily work with greater consciousness.

We often find that our teachers go through cycles of exploring, interacting and engaging with new learning much like the children do . . . sometimes very excited and motivated, other times having difficulty focusing their goals, organizing their ideas and following through with plans. Do you see these cycles with your teachers and, if so, how do you, as a pedagoga, vary your support for them?

Paola: It seems natural to experience difficulties in one's job when organizing and trying to fulfill objectives which are based on a high standard, especially when these objectives are not pre-established by a school program but are created in the field by the teachers working together with each other and with the children. I have often personally experienced these situations, which do not only apply to teachers. I think it is important to face up to them not only as a problem of the few, but as a possible and precious opportunity

for engaging in a dialogue and exchange of views between the teachers and the *pedagogista*. This means, therefore, facing up to situations like the one suggested in the question, not just to highlight that which one is not capable of doing or has not done, but rather as an opportunity for reviewing ourselves. The idea is perhaps to focus more clearly on what we are, to reflect on the reality of our situation, the daily context that we live in and experience, and the choices that we have already gone through as a school, as teachers and as a group.

I think it is important to sustain and nurture the working group's desire and need to reflect upon their own project work, with a close interconnection between theory and practice. This process of reflection should be capable of investigating and appraising the relationship between the theoretical presuppositions of educational experience and teaching practice, between the project's initial thesis and the subsequent quality of the working experiences with the children in the field. These issues should be thought of in relation to the problem areas and skills which may be illuminated by the children themselves. The aim is to discover together the limitations and incongruities as well as the aspects which may or may not emerge in the *progettazione* and development of the educational experience. This promotes a process of self-assessment which involves all the members of the school and is necessary in order to enable

us to re-read with greater consciousness the choices that were made or to identify other possible choices that may lead to new developments and advances.

If you were to describe the most rewarding and motivating part of your work as a pedagogista, what would it be?

This process of reflection should be capable of investigating and appraising the relationship between the theoretical presuppositions of educational experience and teaching practice, between the project's initial thesis and the subsequent quality of the working experiences with the children in the field
Paola Cavazzoni

Paola: The most important and gratifying part of the job is to be a participant in a pedagogical project that is characterized by the value it places on collegial work and educational co-responsibility. This gives us a strong sense of belonging to the community and the group, which is expressed both within our centers – in our relations with other *pedagogistas*, in professional education exchanges with our city's centers for 0 to 6 year old children, and in the continuity of our relations with the children, teachers and parents from infant-toddler center to preschool – and outside them, with people other than our colleagues –

such as people from other cultural worlds, both Italian and foreign.

This climate of openness to dialogue and exchange among ourselves and with others, which has long characterized and given identity to the Reggio educational experience, seems to me to be a way of living our work with great richness and quality, and this is confirmed to me every day. It is a human as well as a professional richness which gives sustenance to our

determination to think about and create a school that delights in research and knowledge, in being with and relating to others. This means having infant-toddler centers and preschools which are conveyors of values in a continuous commitment to thinking of themselves as places of culture, a culture which applies to childhood as well as to humanity.

If you were to describe the most challenging part of your work as a pedagoga, what would it be?

Paola: The very identity of our educational project is based on recognizing children as rich communicators and builders of values and rights, and on the idea of school as a place of research by children and adults in a living community. This itself presupposes the undertaking of great responsibilities while distancing ourselves from a poor image of childhood and school, which is culturally and traditionally stronger in Italy and in other countries. From a certain point of view, it is the image of childhood, of the infant-toddler center and preschool which provides the challenge because it disregards the mantle of conformity which tends to underutilize the children's and the adults' potential and intelligence. This outlook gives us a commitment to welcoming and discussing different images of the child, child welfare and of the quality of the service, not only when we deal with people from outside but also in our daily work, in our relationship and dialogue with educators and parents as citizens who experience our services.

Therefore, the most challenging aspect of my work and the work of others probably consists of pledging ourselves to our belief in openness towards exchange of views and opinions, even when these relate to the founding principles of our educational approach, in the hope and with the goal of increasing the awareness and responsibility of our choices as adults, which is so important for the projection of our future and that of the children.

What role does collaboration play in teacher education? How do you define collaboration? Can you expand on its importance in relation to the learning process?

Accordingly,
we believe that
children have a right
to teachers who
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who are able to
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educate themselves in
a dynamic way and
pay careful attention
to any changes in the
situation in which they
and the children live.

Paola Cavazzoni

Paola: Educational competencies arise from the interaction with educational practice. This means that, instead of being consumers, the children and those who spend time with them are, in fact, the primary producers of the culture of childhood. Accordingly, we believe that children have a right to teachers who can enter into a relationship of mutual listening with them, who are able to change, renew and educate themselves in a dynamic way

and pay careful attention to any changes in the situation in which they and the children live.

Permanent professional development and research, however, is not only a right of individual teachers but it is also a right or duty of the entire group of educators. Discussion and collaboration with and among colleagues represents a daily feature which cannot be relinquished, since it is

founded on the concerted construction of the meanings of our work, to enable educational activities to take place in the best way possible. Collaboration, in this sense, represents more than a work situation in which the teachers find themselves, but an interpretive and projected environment. As I have stated many times already, this is a way of living the school which does not eliminate differences of roles and responsibilities between teachers, *pedagogistas*, *atelieristas*, auxiliary staff, cooks. On the contrary, it recognizes and conveys to each individual the essential nature of the value of common participation to knowledge about education.

As equal partners in the educational project, how are parents brought into the process of teacher education?

Paola: They are brought in right from the beginning. Participation and/or the relationship with the families cannot begin from a given moment in time, for example, after the children have become used to the school or after the first few months of school. An infant-toddler center or a school which desires to practice participation must be able to mobilize itself and set in motion opportunities for individual and group exchanges even before the children and the parents come into the school. The teachers must be able to plan and set up the tools (notebooks, diaries, etc.) for supporting the flow of the parents' ideas and their development over the course of time. They must know how to organize the infant-toddler and preschool spaces as welcoming environments, space which is suitable for retaining the traces, testimonies, voices and the active presence of today's and yesterday's parents as part of the history of the school.

It is important that the choices of working projects related to family participation should be coupled with teacher education and exchange opportunities so that the image of the family and parenthood that each of us nurtures can be discussed. As educators, we have to select and make explicit the type of image we want to use as a reference. Therefore, Reggio Emilia's choice to believe in parents who are strong and powerful by virtue of their very parenthood entails the choice of valuing family participation in the life of our centers. It also means that the teachers should not necessarily look for the kind of parents that comes closest to their idealized model of the family, but instead recognize and value families or parents individually. This means listening to their questions, doubts, desires and tailoring one's own approach accordingly while, at the same time, being able to build on these individual questions as opportunities for the school to discuss the values of education.

Are there ever times when the adults within the classroom, the parents or members of the larger supporting community at the school truly disagree with some aspect of the philosophy, and do not want to engage in reflection or work to understand this way of supporting children's learning? What do you see as the role of the pedagogista in these situations?

Paola: Most adults who come into our centers are unprepared for this type of school, therefore, their belief in our overall educational project must be developed. We feel that every adult who is exposed to our experience and whose child begins to attend our infant-toddler center or school is an important partner in the experience and has a right to be informed about the

philosophy and the organization of our services. The adult has the right to be informed of the opportunities for participating in the life of the school, both for contributing to the experience and to check the overall quality of the service. I think families have a right to communicate to the school the quality indicators they use to measure the degree to which the school provides a positive experience, and to request discussions about these or any other aspects of the educational process with which they may not agree or which they may not understand.

Therefore, I think that debate and the possibility of exchanging opinions is important, and parents should be able to express their disagreement since this represents an important example of democratic participation. If parents feel they can do so, this generally means they have felt legitimated by the school to express their opinions and doubts. As to how to face the situation referred to in the question, I think this is the job of many people, including the teachers and the *pedagogistas*. The ways of arranging meetings with the parents are very important, though they may differ according to each situation. Sometimes individual interviews may be more useful for resolving problems in a more personalized way. At other times, wider meetings which are more open to the other parents may be more effective and enriching. In both cases, the task of the school is to foster and increase the adults' awareness of and sense of belonging to the values of that particular school community.

Our teachers often feel there is a dichotomy between the more child-centered, cooperative way of learning in their rooms and the learning that takes place once the children move to the primary grades. The teachers sometimes question how to make

the transition easier without compromising their own beliefs. If this is a challenge for your teachers, how do you, as a pedagoga, support their concerns and encourage them to be true to their work?

Paola: The concern about what happens after the preschool experience is a concern which is well-founded from the point of view of didactics as well as on a cultural and social level. This represents a topical issue for us in Reggio, and it is being developed and addressed by setting up opportunities (not an easy thing) for exploring and for increasing information between these two educational spheres. These are very interesting occasions, even though they are still at the stage of lively experimentation.

Concern about the transition should not diminish the value and importance of preschools or detract from the teachers' educational consciousness and responsibility for the quality of the educational experience of children in the first 6 years of their lives. Teachers can capture the uniqueness and extraordinary nature of these years for the child's development from a cognitive, emotional and relational point of view. The teachers' desire to help the child in this transition to primary school can be very interesting if it is coupled with a deep reflection about the identity of the preschool, the idea of educational continuity, and children's potential strengths as well as their limits in facing this change. Infant-toddler centers and preschools prepare children for the world and, to the children, they are the world, a world which is full and rich with meaning. ◊

THE POTENTIAL OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

by Brenda Fyfe, Lori Geismar-Ryan and Jennifer Strange

Jennifer Strange is a teacher of four and five year-old children at the College School of Webster Groves in St. Louis, an independent school for children from 3 to 14 years old with a long history of experiential, integrated outdoor education. Lori Geismar-Ryan is the pedagogical director at the Clayton Schools' Family Center, which is part of the Clayton Public School District in Clayton, Missouri and provides early childhood education and parent education from infancy through the school years. Brenda Fyfe is a professor of education at Webster University, a private, independent university in St. Louis with campuses all over the world and an international focus. Jennifer, Lori and Brenda are members of the St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative which includes twenty to twenty-five teachers and administrators from The College School, the Clayton Schools' Family Center and The St. Michael School, who have worked together to collectively support their professional development since 1992. Brenda collaborates with the teachers of the three schools which, in turn, supports her professional development working with pre-service and in-service teachers.

The following was adapted from a presentation at the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference in New Orleans in November 1999. The original presentation was interactive and those attending the seminar participated in a simulated staff meeting in

order to clearly illustrate the collaborative nature of this professional development process. In an effort to communicate the essential elements of this process to the readers of *Innovations*, the seminar presenters and editors of *Innovations* have re-written the presentation. The resulting article is organized in this manner:

Section I: Collaborative action research and the use of the action research cycle for classroom-based teacher inquiry – how the experiences of children, teachers and parents can become research for supporting the learning processes of children and the professional development of teachers.

Section II: Outdoor Study, Part One – an experience with the four and five year-old children, teachers and parents at The College School.

Section III: The St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative's interpretation of Harvard Project Zero's Collaborative Assessment Conference – how this protocol is used by the teachers in the three St. Louis schools to understand experiences with children in order to hypothesize on possibilities for further study.

Section IV: Outdoor Study, Part 2 – the continuation of the exploration of the outdoors with the same group of children, teachers and parents at The College School.

Section V: Implications for teaching and learning





Section I: Collaborative action research and the use of the action research cycle for classroom-based teacher inquiry

"To learn and relearn together with children is our line of work. We proceed in such a way that the children are not shaped by experience, but are the ones who give shape to it. Our teachers do research either on their own or with colleagues to produce strategies that favor children's work or can be utilized by them. They go from research into action (and visa versa) ... the records and documentaries that result from their endeavors are significant beyond the immediate needs for action and become objects of study ... As a result, these teachers feel, and help others to feel, more motivation to grow and attain a much higher level of professionalism. In the process, our teachers realize that they must avoid the temptation of expecting the children to give them back what they already know, but instead they must retain the same sense of wonder that children live through in their discoveries."

— Loris Malaguzzi

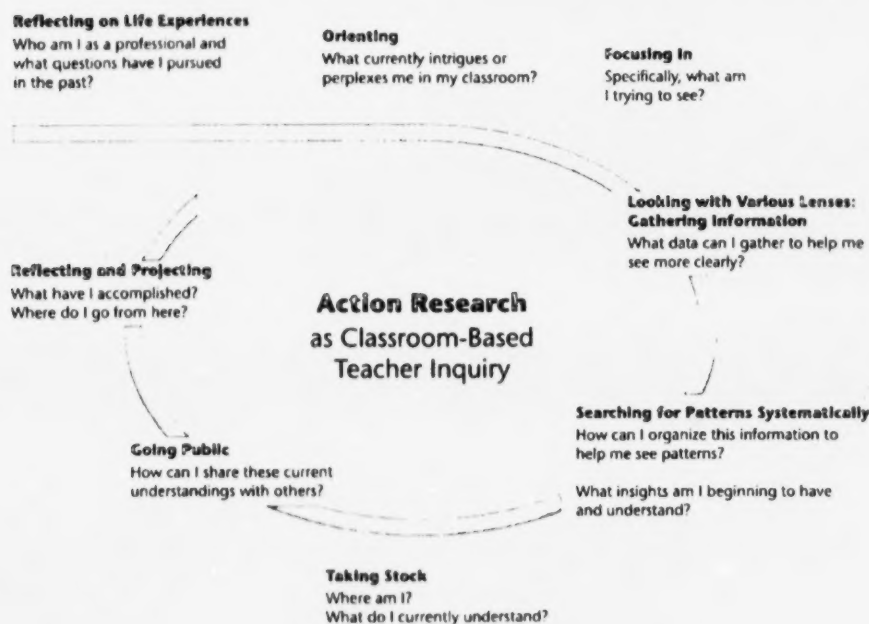
Edwards, Gandini & Forman (Eds.), *The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach – Advanced Reflections*, 1998

This powerful statement from Loris Malaguzzi [founder of the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools] emphasizes the value of collaborative action research in understanding the learning processes of children and adults. Throughout this cyclical process, research leads to action and action leads to research. The experience with action research has enabled the educators in our collaborative group to learn and relearn with children, and empower them to give shape to their experience. Collaborative action research offers educators the opportunity for collective or group reflection and analysis of a set of records, of data, of documentation. This process also creates opportunities to participate in the collaborative style of work which Carlina Rinaldi [Reggio Children pedagogista and pedagogical consultant] says "asks teachers to think, plan, work and interpret together." It is a collaborative style of work that insists that we make our thinking and observations visible, so we are in a better position to discuss them with our colleagues.

As a result of our many years of study of the Reggio Emilia approach, the educators of the

St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative have embraced the concept of documentation, a concept that Carlina says makes research "a permanent learning strategy for children and adults." We've learned to use documentation to support discourse, the reflective talk of people who are studying each other's perspectives and interpretations with the aim of co-constructing shared understanding. Documentation and discourse enable us to generate designs for future learning experiences that have continuity with children's thinking and prior experience (see Forman & Fyfe in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 1998). The work of the Reggio Emilia educators has greatly influenced our thinking about teaching as research.

The Clayton School District Action Research Collaborative, a group of teachers and administrators, has used action research strategies to influence day-to-day classroom practice. This group of colleagues developed an action research cycle based on a curriculum development cycle in Kathy Short and Carolyn Burke's book, *Creating Curriculum*. [see diagram of cycle



Adapted July, 1996, by Kathryn Mitchell Pierce and the Clayton Action Research Collaborative from The Inquiry Cycle developed by K. Short and C. Burke in *Creating Curriculum*, (1993), Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

on this page] At the very top of the cycle, "reflecting on life's questions, orienting and focusing-in" constitutes about one third of the cycle. This is the question formulation part of action research. Questions generally emerge from interests or thoughts that teachers have developed over time through personal and professional experiences. Reflecting on those personal and professional experiences helps us to begin to find patterns in our questions and to focus. In *Outdoor Studies, Part One*, the two teachers in the four and five-year-old classroom at The College School, Jennifer Strange and Jamie Devlin, decided on the emphasis of their inquiry with the children for the year. Orienting and focusing-in refines the question and moves us from the general to the specific. In action research, new questions are formulated as we move through the cycle. The focusing-in period requires sharing thoughts with others, explaining projects, articu-

lating how you intend to proceed and addressing others' wonderings about your plan.

The next stage in the cycle, "looking with various lenses," would be called data collection in the traditional research paradigm. In this research paradigm, we search for the appropriate tools for gathering the observations and records, the trails and traces of our experiences that can help us answer the questions we have and better understand our work with the children. Advances in technology offer us many new tools for documentation. We ask ourselves: Which tools and techniques are best suited to the kind of observation we anticipate? Which kinds of records will leave the most interpretable traces? Which are available and in working order? For example, video might be preferred if we want to study children's movement outdoors. An audio tape recorder may be more appropriate and useful in recording conversations of children. Slides might be preferred over

photos if we anticipate wanting to revisit the experience with a group of children. A digital camera could offer us quick, easy and economic revisiting possibilities. There are many, many lenses that help us to see. Interviews with children and parents might give us other sources of data.

"Searching for patterns systematically" is the part of the cycle when we enter into dialogue with the data, when we question it, try to find meaning in it, find new understandings, bring some order and some structure. We try to discover what's underneath the surface of all of this. What did this really mean? This is the point at which things can either become much clearer or far less clear. Sometimes we discover what is missing from the data, making it necessary to go back to an earlier phase of the cycle in which we might re-frame the questions or pick another research strategy.

"Taking stock" is the phase of the action research cycle where teacher-researchers take time away from the project and several steps back from the up-close study of data to see what has emerged. This is also an opportunity to share the experience more broadly, get multiple perspectives, then go back and collect additional data, if necessary. It is an opportunity to get another critical lens. In Part Two of the Outdoor Study, Jennifer Strange took stock of the work she was doing and revisited her initial questions as well as her experiences.

Next in the cycle is "going public." Where are you going to share this information? Each one of us has a different set of opportunities. For those of us working in classrooms by ourselves and engaging in action research or inquiry, going to the teacher next door is a way of going public. Others are fortunate to have co-teaching situations and may choose to go to a school-wide meeting and share this information with the other educators in their school. Some people place these documents in more visible and public places, writing articles or presenting at conferences. Malaguzzi says that research is for the individual teacher as well as the profession as a whole. The power of action research is its influence on the individual teacher and the individual children in the classroom. "Going public" supports the professional development of oneself and others. At the end of the cycle, we ask ourselves: What we have accomplished? How do we continue our study?



Leaves must get
their points from
being outside -
getting dry and
being on the hard
ground
- Claire

Section II: Outdoor Study, Part One

Last year, Jennifer and Jamie, two co-teachers in the four and five year-old classroom at The College School, began with some projections and intentions about the school year based on some things that they knew, some things they had hopes for, and some things they were dreaming about. First of all, they wanted to explore relationships and connections in outdoor spaces. The two teachers based this decision on the strong history of outdoor education at The College School and the observations they made of the outdoor-related interests of several of the children and parents that they already knew. They also considered their own love and respect for this world away from buildings.

At this point, Jennifer and Jamie asked themselves about relationships to the outdoor world. They wondered about several things: What will the children and teachers uncover and how will we benefit from learning about ourselves, children and adults, in relationship to the outdoor world? For instance, what is the effect of changing conditions within seasons and weather? What is seen and unseen in the outdoors? How do we listen for sounds or absence of sounds? What are the shades of and emotional relationships with natural color? What is real? What is imagined?

Jennifer and Jamie had another strong interest in motion and they combined it into this study of the outdoor world: How is the emotion of movement influenced by the outdoor environment? How does the environment restrict and free movement? How can we work with our school's creative movement specialist to better understand these reactions of the body and senses? Building on their long-term studies concerning children's portraits, the teachers also proposed adding the study of self-portraits in motion and wondered

about the challenges they would encounter. The biggest question was: How will we best observe and document experiences related to these questions? The two teachers shared their intentions with Louise Cadwell, the *atelierista*/studio teacher at The College School. In the spirit of collaboration, they made agreements together as to how they might begin.

A supportive piece emerged concerning the beginning study. Children were returning to school with their summer books filled with memories about their summer vacation. As Jennifer and Jamie read the books with the children, they realized that each book contained experiences in the outdoors with their families. The two teachers shared this information about the summer books and their intentions concerning the outdoors with the parents at a parent/teacher exchange. They sought the parents' input and advice as to how they might further the possibilities of this study.

The children and teachers began with simple neighborhood walks. Jennifer and Jamie decided to support the children as decision-makers while they set the direction of the walks, as well as risk-takers while they made wrong turns and correct turns. The teachers also observed and recorded the children's particular interests about what they were seeing, hearing and feeling. Here are some reflective comments made by the children following these first walks:

William: "Remember the fire leaf I found?
It was really red."

Jackson: "When I close my eyes, I see our shadows. I see our shadows walking down the sidewalk."



gentle than the indoor ones

Megan: "I remember the 'tickle grass' by the flowers."

Adam: "I remember the dried-up worm on the sidewalk."

William: "I don't think that worm will still be there!"

Casey: "Well, I liked that walk. We got good exercise."

Jennifer and Jamie did not specifically project or hypothesize about a common childhood inclination, the interest of many young children in collecting. The children asked to take collecting baskets on their walks. The teachers challenged them to collect treasures that would "fit in the palms of their hands."

Taylor said this about collecting, "The outdoor collections are more gentle than the indoor ones,

you know, indoor collections like stuffed animals. You have to be careful with outdoor collections."

Katie said, "I found this walnut, but watch out for the inside! If you press your finger on it really hard, it will pinch. Your finger can just fit in. Oh, it looks like a little hideout."

As Jennifer and Jamie had intended, they also documented the movement of the children in the outdoors through photos and video. As they photographed the children, they became increasingly aware of the children's desire to find special places into which only they could crawl or climb.

Maggie said, "A special place can be big or it can be small, but it is secret and special. You can imagine there and you can hide. And, sometimes, you can feel the wind on your neck."

Section III: St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative's Interpretation of Harvard Project Zero's Collaborative Assessment Conference

The educators of the St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative have recently encountered an extremely useful tool known as the Collaborative Assessment Conference developed by Harvard University's Project Zero. Project Zero, the Annenberg Institute and the Coalition of Essential Schools have been experimenting with new strategies for looking at children's work. We have worked most with Project Zero's Collaborative Assessment Conference [see box on this page for description of the seven steps of the St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative's interpretation of this protocol]. After the group chooses a facilitator, one teacher or team of teachers begins the process by sharing a bit of data, some initial observations documented, perhaps through slides and interviews with children. The teacher who facilitates the discussion invites the others to participate by describing what they observed in the data, in the experience just presented.

Following the description of the work, the focus of the discussion shifts to providing various perspectives, a more interpretive kind of conversation about the work. Teachers have the opportunity to raise questions about the children's work, reflect on the child in the learning environment and suggest ways to improve and enhance the experience for groups of children and individual children.

Then the teachers in the group are asked to make speculations about the teaching and learning observed. At this point, the teachers in the group can think more deeply about learning and development, peeling the layers of this experience. This is the part of the process when teachers can begin to question the essence of the data and the observations. What are the children understanding, feeling, thinking or learning through this experience?

The recording or documentation of this discussion is very important. This data serves to inform the project as it goes forward. This is the data analysis of this research. The presenting teacher can only listen and take notes. She or he cannot respond to the comments of the group until after the observations, questions and speculations have been made by the participating teachers. Then the presenting teacher has the opportunity to respond to any questions or issues raised by the group.

In the next step of the protocol, the participating teachers ask themselves: What are the implications of all that we've collectively reflected upon? What are some possibilities for how the presenting teachers might proceed in this study with the children?

St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative's Interpretation of Harvard Project Zero's Collaborative Assessment Conference

- 1. Getting started.** *The group chooses a facilitator to guide the participants through each phase of the conference. The presenting teacher shares documents without making interpretive comments.*
- 2. Describing the work.** *The group members describe any aspects of the work they notice. They do not make interpretive comments.*
- 3. Raising questions.** *The group asks questions about the child, the curriculum, or any other area. The presenting teacher takes notes, but does not respond.*
- 4. Speculating about what the child is working on.** *The group begins to hypothesize about what the child is working on, areas of child development that were supported by this work, and ideas and knowledge the child was expressing.*
- 5. The "presenting teacher" speaks.** *The presenting teacher now adds her perspective on each of the previous phases of the meeting. She provides her own perspective on the work and responds to any questions or issues raised by the group.*
- 6. Implications for teaching and learning.** *Everyone is invited to share any thoughts that have been stimulated by the examination of the work. These could include thoughts about their own teaching, children, learning or ways to support a particular child in reaching his/her potential.*
- 7. Final reflection.** *This is a time for the group members to reflect on the process of their own thinking and interaction during the meeting.*

Section IV: Outdoor Study, Part Two

Jennifer and Jamie met with their colleagues, including Brenda Fyfe who often consults with them, to examine and reflect upon their gathered data: photos, transcribed conversations and written observations. The teachers generated many new questions. They decided to follow a line of inquiry about mixing the colors of nature. The teachers projected offering to children the idea of a mural motif for these emerging shades of nature. They also projected the possibility of the children painting this mural outside, among actual falling leaves and surrounded by baskets of their own collected natural materials. The children were interested in mixing many colors, giving them such names as "fire leaf red," "fall daisy purple" and "bright blue morning." The children agreed that using these colors to paint a mural was a good idea. As they painted their mural, some children added some natural materials from their collections. As Jamie and Jennifer reflected on this development, they decided to pursue why some children had done so. Jamie asked, "It is interesting the way some of you have decided to glue real leaves on the paper and then paint around them. Why did you do that?"

Taylor said, "The blue around my leaf shows it floating on a river."

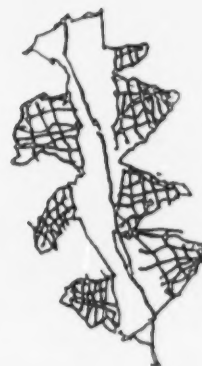
Erin added, "The blue around my leaf means it is floating through the sky."

Then Taylor said, "This whole thing, the mural, looks like a 'wall of fall'! Everything looks like it is blowing in the wind."

The children's collections continued to be a part of the classroom environment and part of the materials. Playing with these materials on a light box supported the teacher's suggestion that the children might like to make a special mural of small openings, "special places," for their "palm of the hand" collections. Many leaves were also being collected. Each child chose a particular leaf to draw from our large collection. These careful drawings seemed to become strong symbols for the children as they closely observed each characteristic of their leaves and thought of what the leaves meant.

Chase said, "You can find one special leaf, draw it and it becomes your very own."

Their natural collections also became incorporated in their clay work and sculptures emerged.



CLAY
TOU

The word "veins"
about leaves is
interesting to me -
I never even knew that was
what they were called.
- Clayton



Drawing my leaf made me
remember the fun of being
inside a BIG pile of leaves.
- Jackson



You can find one
special leaf that becomes
your very own.
- Chase



Our feet are tickled
by the leaves
on the ground.
- Justin

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As the holidays approached, some children and Jennifer discussed the possibilities for gifts they might make for their families.

Max said, "We know a lot about leaves. Could we make some?"

With the help of their collections and shades of fall color, the children created beautiful clay tiles bearing the impressions and colors of their favorite leaves.

Aware of the preschool's tradition of a holiday celebration, parents began discussing what they could make for the children. Because of their interest and involvement in following the children's experiences, the parents decided to make each of their children a collection box. They gathered together on an early evening in December to create these boxes. These gifts, made by children and parents, were exchanged at a holiday party held in the preschool.

After the holidays, Jennifer and Jamie once again reflected on all that had happened and speculated on what might come. In a mid-year addendum to their beginning projections and intentions, Jennifer wrote, "Are we documenting well enough the experiences, the relationships, the connections being made by children, parents and teachers?"

The children and teachers continued their outdoor adventures, going farther and farther afield. They looked at the subtle shades of winter, the textures, the emotions. Jennifer asked, "Is there a color of winter?"

Jackson answered, "It is the color of the stuff that comes out of my mouth when I go out of my house in the morning ... mmm, it's frost ... yeah, frost!"

Then spring began. Children, families and teachers became increasingly secure in their exploration of the outdoors. During a walk in a large field, Katie said, "I liked this prairie because it had so much space. We wouldn't have to be smushed, we wouldn't have to be crowded. And, you could see far away ... like to the end of St. Louis."

Maggie said, "These flowers are like the yellow ones we saw in the field. They were some kind of yellow with leaves that were so furry."

As the end of the year approached, Jennifer and Jamie felt a need to respect these many experiences and interactions of the outdoors

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with a representation that would strongly support the many facets of this study. In yet another extension of their projections and intentions, the two teachers hypothesized the possibility of taking their outdoor experiences and combining them with the challenge of the children drawing their self-portraits in motion. This study culminated in the construction of a large diorama of each child represented moving through a woods of their memories and imaginations ... a wonderful woods that also contained representations of special places, special experiences and actual pieces of the children's natural collections. This piece became a quickly-revered and well-loved document.

Finally, Jennifer and Jamie asked the children to reflect on their year's experience in the outdoors. Here are a few responses:

Clayton: "One of the important things about being outside is sometimes you need to be really quiet."

Jackson: "I was so quiet, I heard a rabbit ruffling through the leaves."

William: "But I liked my feeling of adventure, too!"

Katie: "I liked the feeling of wind tickling my face ... even cold wind."

Taylor: "Yeah, and I learned to enjoy a worm crawling on my hand. But, my most important feeling is a soft, peaceful, quiet kind of feeling."



You know, it's not every day you get to have those kinds of feelings."

In *A Child's Deep Delight*, Thomas Moore writes, "Innately, children know how to relate to nature, and so we might consider lessons in which they are as much teachers as learners. We could listen to their lessons, paying close attention to the secrets they still carry."

Section V: Implications for teaching and learning

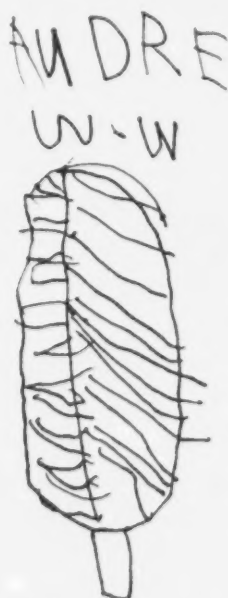
In the sixth step of the St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative's interpretation of Harvard Project Zero's Collaborative Assessment Conference, the participating teachers discuss the broader implications for teaching and learning. At this time, teachers can share any thoughts that have been stimulated by the examination of this work.

These thoughts could be about their own teaching and learning, children or ways to support a particular child reach his or her potential.

A key question for the group is: If we agree that teacher research is the telling of life's stories in a systematic and focused yet rich and detailed way, what do you see in this work that has implications for your work as teacher-researchers?

This is an opportunity for the group to return to the original questions and hypotheses proposed by the presenting teachers. In following the full cycle of that course of action research, they can speculate on what was revealed through this study. These teachers can re-visit it again in order to learn for future experiences and they can examine the data in different ways. In the Outdoor Study, teachers could look at the whole strand of children's experience with "palm of the hand" collections. The group could pull out the strands of experience related to the neighborhood walks. They could examine the data to see if and how

the experience of the walks affected children's developing ideas of portraits in motion. This is the interesting thing about research. You can look at the data in many ways. The Outdoor Study was shared in a narrative, somewhat chronological sequence. We can also ask: What is the deeper meaning? How can we examine this data in order to understand some other aspects?



Going through the leaves
Frrrr Frrrr Frrrr
It's a warn feeling.
- Andrew

Working with the action research cycle can be unpredictable. But one thing is predictable ... the questions will change. The participating teachers always have to cycle back to their initial questions based on the actions that were taken by those in the experience. The real life situation in the classroom can modify their initial questions. So the questions are not solid; they're fluid and dynamic. The teachers involved always cycle back and think: How can we proceed in a meaningful way based on what's happened?

There's much opportunity for adjustment along the way.

Action research proceeds in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of planning, action and evaluation of the result of action. In the Outdoor Study, Jennifer, Jamie and their colleagues met frequently throughout the course of the project to reflect on new observations that might lead them to re-think original hypotheses and ask new

questions. They kept coming back to the children, following their lead. They frequently re-visited experiences with children to reflect on what they had learned, to uncover new questions that might be pursued, and to negotiate and obtain their agreement about ways to proceed. Jennifer and Jamie shared with the children some of the documentation of their experiences (e.g., photos, slides, drawings, comments) to support their ability to reflect. These are some of the ways in which children are supported as co-researchers. There are multiple cycles in this process that can include teachers, children and parents as co-researchers.

The action research process doesn't ever happen the same way more than once. Each situation will determine the best time to share information with your colleagues. This is a structure that has been working well when the three collaborative St. Louis schools meet. It's been very helpful when an experience has been going on for a month or more and the teachers involved are in a position to receive feedback from their colleagues. The shared experience can also be very short, just a few moments.

The educators in the St. Louis Reggio Collaborative have found value in using this process at many times and in many ways. This process has been a valuable tool for supporting professional development. At any point in time, one can grow professionally by looking back at documented observations. We can learn something new each time, if we approach the material

with open-mindedness, a habit of mind that John Dewey advocated as a disposition to question our prior understandings, an active desire to listen to more than one side. It is a way to exercise our thinking about how to support children. For our three collaborative schools, this protocol has provided a structure that keeps us focused and enhances our way of talking about the work.

This professional development process represents a paradigm of teaching as a collegial and research-based activity. It requires that we make our observations visible so that we can study them with colleagues. It insists that we consider multiple perspectives on what we have observed, what we question, what we interpret, what we hypothesize and project. It moves teaching, learning and researching from an isolated activity to an interactive collegial process, a process that can be shared by teachers, children and parents. It makes research a learning strategy for children and adults.

"Research is a high-hat word that scares a lot of people. It needn't. Essentially, research is nothing but a state of mind, a friendly welcoming attitude towards change, going out to look for change instead of waiting for it to come. It is the problem-solving mind as contrasted with the 'let well enough alone' mind. It is the tomorrow mind instead of the yesterday mind."

— Charles Ketting

Hubbard & Miller, *Living the Questions: A Guide for Teacher-Researchers*, 1999 o

Web Sites:

The Annenberg Institute:

www.aisr.brown.edu/html/lsw/facilitation

Harvard University Project Zero:

<http://pzweb.harvard.edu>

The Atlas Communities/Coalition for Essential Schools:

www.edc.org/FSC/ATLAS/toolkit.learn

www.edc.org/FSC/ATLAS/toolkit.tuning

REGGIO CONFERENCE CALENDAR

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education.

We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy; phone: 011-39-522-455416, fax: 011-39-522-455621, e-mail: reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it.

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of Innovations to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools. A regularly updated conference calendar can be found on the Merrill-Palmer Institute web site (<http://www.mpi.wayne.edu>).

The Innovative Teacher Project

Mills College • Oakland, Calif.

Saturday Roundtables:

September 9,
November 18 &
December 9, 2000

Seminar:

October 21, 2000: Amelia
Gambetti, "The Hundred
Languages of Children Exhibit"

Contact:

Susan Lyon, Director
The Innovative Teacher Project
Mills College
(510) 430-3105
fax (510) 430-3233
slyon@mills.edu

The Program for Collaborative Learning

Cyert Center for Early Education,
Carnegie Mellon University •
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Jill Watson Festival:

Sept. 14-16, 2000: Michele Zini,
Vea Vecchi and Tullio Zini,
"Children, Spaces, Relations:
Metaproject for an Environment
for Young Children"

Contact:

Lindie Droulia
Cyert Center for Early Education
Program for Collaborative Learning
(412) 268-1512
droulia@andrew.cmu.edu

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators • Wayne State University • Detroit, Mi.

October 7, 2000: George
Forman, "Using Documentation
to Reveal the Concepts in
Children's Work: The Challenge
of a Useful Interpretation"

March 3, 2001: Pam Oken-
Wright, "Documentation:
Both Mirror and Light"

May 12, 2001: Dorothy Kelsie-
Miller, "Creating a System of
Support for Reflective Practice
and Professional Development
at Chicago Commons"

Contact:

Judith Allen Kaminsky
Merrill-Palmer Institute
Wayne State University
(313) 872-1790
fax (313) 875-0947
j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu

St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative

The College School, Clayton
Schools' Family Center, St.
Michael School & Webster
University • St. Louis, Mo.

Delegation Days:

October 17-19, 2000 &
April 4, 2001

International Conference:

April 5-7, 2001

Intensive Workshop:

Fall 2001

Contact:

Michael Holohan
St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative
Coordinator
(314) 324-4940
e-mail: mpholohan@earthlink.net

National Association for the Education of Young Children 2000 Annual Conference • Atlanta, Ga. November 8-11, 2000

November 8, 2000:

Pre-conference on the Reggio
Emilia educational philosophy

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November 9-11, 2000:

Seminars & sessions focused
on the Reggio Emilia approach

Contact:

NAEYC Registration
1509 16th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036
(800) 424-2460,
(202) 232-8777
fax (202) 797-1651
web site: www.naeyc.org
or
Merrill-Palmer Institute
web site: www.mpi.wayne.edu

**Reggio Emilia Explorations:
Study Tour, Presentation
and Discussion on Research
Studies** • Chicago Commons
Child Development Program •
Chicago, Ill. • Dec. 7-8, 2000 &
May 3-4, 2001

Contact:

Juana Reyes
Chicago Commons Child
Development Program
(773) 342-5330
reyesj@chicagocommons.org

NEW RESOURCE FROM REGGIO CHILDREN!

Reggio Tutta: A Guide to the City by the Children

From a survey carried out in the
municipal infant-toddler centers
and preschools of Reggio Emilia, a
"guide" that outlines the identity of
the city and develops the dimension
of the children's relationship with
a real or hypothetical visitor, with
their suggestions on what to see
and how to visit and live in Reggio
Emilia. A portrait of the city made
by the children, along with essays,
contributions and notes on the
educational context.

Available from Reggio Children USA,
(800) 424-4310, (202) 265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161,
web site: <http://www.cdacouncil.org>

REGGIO CHILDREN: INFORMATION, CONTACTS, EXHIBIT SCHEDULE & RESOURCES

Reggio Children

In the spring of 1994, the Reggio Children organization was formed in Reggio Emilia, Italy, to support the municipality's world-renowned early childhood program. The goal of Reggio Children is to disseminate the wealth of knowledge in theory and practice that has resulted from more than 30 years of experience in the education of children from 3 months to 6 years of age. Through publication and distribution of books, articles, videos and slides that document the Reggio approach, educators can learn more about these educational principles and benefit their own classrooms.

Reggio Children also responds to the increasingly numerous requests for information and cooperative exchanges that arrive from all over the world. Reggio Children is a private, for-profit company governed by a board of directors and supported by shareholders – corporate, private (parents, teachers and other citizens of Reggio Emilia), and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia which holds the majority of shares. Until now this organization has not been open to individuals outside Italy.

Friends of Reggio Children

In memory of Loris Malaguzzi, Friends of Reggio Children, a non-profit, international organization, has been formed and membership is open to all. The goal of Friends of Reggio Children is to create an endowment that would establish a library for collecting documents about the Reggio approach and to provide funds for student research on the Reggio philosophy and principles.

Friends of Reggio Children is asking for your support. A one-time donation will entitle you to become a member of an international group who believes in the educational principles that the Reggio program exemplifies and in the right of children to obtain the best care and education possible. The association's membership fee is \$35 U.S. and can be paid by banker's draft or by bank transfer (bank account # 26056/C at Cassa di Risparmio di Reggio Emilia, Piazza Battisti 1, 42100 Reggio Emilia. Members of Friends of Reggio Children will receive a subscription to *rechild*, the newsletter published by Reggio Children.

SUBSCRIBE! SUBSCRIBE!

Name _____

Address _____

City • State • ZIP code _____

Phone _____

Subscriptions to *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange* are \$25 (\$30 U.S. funds for foreign) per year for four issues. Fill out the printed form and mail with a check payable to the Merrill-Palmer Institute to:

Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange • The Merrill-Palmer Institute • Wayne State University • 71 East Ferry Ave. • Detroit, MI 48202

HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN EXHIBIT IN ATLANTA

Inspired Practices in Early Education, Inc., is proud to host the Hundred Languages of Children exhibit in Atlanta during November and December 2000. The exhibit will be located at the SunTrust Plaza lower lobby, 303 Peachtree Street at the intersection of Baker Street (directly across the street from the Hyatt hotel).

Admission to the exhibit is free. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, November 9-12. Thereafter, the exhibit will be open 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, closed Sundays, November 13-December 30. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Consult the final program of NAEYC for a schedule of special volunteers who will be present at the exhibit during specially scheduled times. Also, consult the final program to purchase tickets (\$35) to attend the grand opening reception, sponsored by the Georgia Association on Young Children in cooperation with Inspired Practices and in collaboration with Reggio Children. For more information, call Inspired Practices at 770-552-0179.

STUDY TOURS

Angela Ferrario works with the offices of Reggio Children to organize study tours of the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools. Check the Merrill-Palmer Institute web site [<http://www.mpi.wayne.edu>] for the most current information about future study tours.

For information, contact:
Angela Ferrario
13 Ellery St., Apt. 4, Cambridge,
MA 02138
(617) 864-5888,
fax (617) 864-1095

CONTACTS FOR REGGIO CHILDREN

Reggio Children
USA Office for Publications
(Carol Brunson Day)
c/o Council for
Professional Recognition
2460 16th. St., N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 424-4310,
(202) 265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161
web site:
<http://www.cdacouncil.org>

Angela Ferrario
Liaison in the U.S. for study
tours and summer institutes
in Reggio Emilia
13 Ellery St., #4, Cambridge,
MA 02138
(617) 864-5888,
fax (617) 864-1095

Amelia Gambetti
Reggio Children Coordinator
and Liaison for consultancy
in schools
c/o Reggio Children
Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100
Reggio Emilia, Italy
39-0522-455416,
fax 39-0522-455621
e-mail: reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it

Lella Gandini
Liaison in the U.S. for
dissemination of the Reggio
Emilia Approach
American Academy in Rome
Via Angelo Masina, 5, 00153
Roma, Italy
39-06-58310928,
fax 39-06-5810788 (at Academy)
e-mail: lellagandini@compuserve.com
(**temporary address for five
years, beginning on August 20,
1998**)

"THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN" EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

March 25, 1999 - Oct. 2000
Mills College, Oakland, Calif.
Contact: Susan Lyon •
Innovative Teacher Project •
Mills College • 5000 MacArthur
Blvd. • Oakland, CA 94613 •
(510) 430-3105 or 430-2019
voice • fax (510) 430-3233 •
e-mail: slyon@mills.edu

Nov. 5 - Dec. 31, 2000
Atlanta, Ga.
Contact: Margie Cooper •
Inspired Practices in Early
Education, Inc. • 2040 Wilson
Ridge Ct. • Roswell, GA 30075 •
phone & fax (770) 552-0179 •
e-mail: margie.cooper@mindspring.com • web site:
groups.accessatlanta.com/inspiredpractices/

Jan. - Dec. 2001
St. Louis, Mo.
Contact: Ashley Cadwell •
The St. Michael School •
6345 Wydown Blvd. • St. Louis,
MO 63105 • (314) 721-4670 •
fax (314) 721-4670 • web site:
www.stmichaelschool.org

What's in the future for
"The Hundred Languages
of Children" exhibit?
In its 12 years on the road in
North America, the exhibition
has visited 34 cities in 22 states
and provinces in the United
States and Canada. Beginning in
2002, the exhibit will travel to
Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio
and then on to Florida.

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE REGGIO EMILIA EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

For a comprehensive listing of print and video resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, contact these organizations:

Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
2460 16th. St., N.W.,
Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 424-4310, (202) 265-9090, fax (202) 265-9161
web site:
<http://www.cdacouncil.org>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois, Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr., Champaign, IL 61820-7469
(800) 583-4135,
(217) 333-1386,
fax (217) 333-3767
e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu
(Bernard Cesarone)
web site: <http://ericeece.org/>
Reggio Emilia section:
<http://ericeece.org/reggio.html>

INTERNET/LISTSERV:

REGGIO-L@postoffice.cso.uiuc.edu
REGGIO-L is a discussion list co-owned by the Merrill-Palmer Institute at Wayne State University and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE) at the University of Illinois. REGGIO-L is the place where early childhood educators, researchers, students, parents and others who have an ongoing interest in the Reggio Emilia approach to early education can discuss the educational philosophy behind the Reggio program, teaching approaches and essential elements of the program, its adaptations in the United States, and other related topics - 24 hours a day, seven days a week!

To subscribe, send a message to: listserv@postoffice.cso.uiuc.edu. Leave the subject line blank. Just type: subscribe REGGIO-L YourFirstName YourLastName in the first line of the message area. Co-owners: Judith Allen Kaminsky, Merrill-Palmer Institute (j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu) and Bernard Cesarone, ERIC/EECE (cesarone@uiuc.edu). If you have questions about subscribing, contact: Bernard Cesarone at ERIC/EECE • Voice: (800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386 • E-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu

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Wayne State University
71 E. Ferry Ave., Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 872-1790,
fax (313) 875-0947
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j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu
(Judith Allen Kaminsky)
web site:
<http://www.mpi.wayne.edu>

Reggio Children
Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100
Reggio Emilia, Italy
39-0522-455416,
fax 39-0522-455621
e-mail:
reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it

The Merrill Palmer Institute has added an extensive Reggio Emilia resource section to its web site. The web site now includes:

- Reggio Children information & contacts
- The Hundred Languages of Children exhibit schedule
- Reggio Emilia Study Tour information
- Reggio Children print and video resources
- Reggio Emilia related Conference schedule regularly updated
- North American Reggio network contact information
- Reggio Emilia related resources
- Information on organizations like Reggio Children USA and ERIC who distribute resources
- Information about *Innovations* and the Reggio listserv

Each issue of *Innovations* will continue to include:

- Reggio Children information & contacts
- The Hundred Languages of Children exhibit schedule
- Reggio Children Study Tour information
- Reggio Emilia related conference schedule
- Information on organizations like Reggio Children USA, ERIC and Merrill Palmer Institute who serve as resources for the early childhood community
- New resources from Reggio Children related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy
- Information about the Reggio listserv

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Photographs courtesy of Jennifer Strange. Drawings created by the four and five year-old children at the College School of Webster Groves in St. Louis, Missouri.

Please note that unless *Innovations* prints communications from the office of Reggio Children, the views expressed are those of the individual contributors representing their own interpretations of the Reggio approach at this point in time. We welcome a diversity of opinions and do not attempt to present these voices as the voice of Reggio.

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in early education: the international reggio exchange

